

WARREN
MAGAZINE



VAMPI
#32

APRIL 1974

ALL NEW STORIES AND ART! PLUS **COLOR!**

58885-6

PDC

\$1.00

VAMPIRELLA

WHAT IS THE SECRET
OF THE PLAGUE?
CAN EVEN
VAMPIRELLA
WITHSTAND
THE CURSE...

...THAT
ROTS FLESH
FROM THE
BONES OF MEN?
"RUNNING
RED!"



PLUS: "HARRY" A CLASSIC TALE OF GOTHIC HORROR
WITH ART BY JEFF JONES AND COLOR BY RICH CORBEN!

**THERE'S A BRAND NEW
WARREN MAGAZINE
ON SALE RIGHT NOW!**

THE SPIRIT



Here's a puzzle any amateur sleuth can solve. What does a man from the future, a death-bound trolley, three escaped convicts, and a murderous seven-year-old have in common? Give up? The answer's simple. They're all featured in the first issue of the new action-filled mystery magazine, **THE SPIRIT**. The Spirit! Will Eisner's revolutionary crime-fighter of the forties; dread avenger from beyond the grave. The Spirit! Two-fisted agent of justice... and Warren Publishing's boldest magazine to date. The first collector's edition is on sale NOW! Find **THE SPIRIT**... before **HE** finds **YOU**!

ON SALE NOW!!





OUR COVER
Vampi gets more than she bargained for when the man of her dreams meets "The Running Red." Behind this cover painting of Vampi and her hapless love is artist Enrich.

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& Publisher**
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JOSE GONZALEZ
JEFF JONES
RAMON TORRENTS

**Writers
This Issue**
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JEFF JONES
FLAXMAN LOEW
RICH MARGOPOULOS
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VAMPIRELLA

CONTENTS

ISSUE NO. 32
APRIL 1974

4

VAMPI'S SCARLET LETTERS

Luana! Pantha! These and more cause reader *Steven John* to wonder, "What new wizardry is brewing in the minds of the *Warren* people?"

6

VAMPI'S VAULT Artist *Ramon Torrents* is our captive creator in this month's Vampi's Vault. And there are a trio of fanzines, *WarreNews*, and other goodies on view!

7

THE RUNNING RED VAMPIRELLA meets an ageless *demon* with the power of *Running Red*. The exotic world of casino-life is the battlefield. The prize is life or *death*!

20

PANTHA: BLACK ON WHITE

The she-cat *Pantha* has someone on her tail. And the result is a violent confrontation from which there can be only *one survivor*!

30

THE 1973 WARREN AWARDS

Who will receive the coveted 1973 *Warren Awards*? *Steve Skeates*? *Bill DuBay*? *Richard Corben*? Our fourth annual presentation.

35

HARRY Her parents were *murdered*! Burned to *death* in a horrible blaze. Now she was alone. Lost in the dark woods. But she had *Harry*... a teddy bear with a *deadly secret*!

41

DEAD RUN He ran. Into the forest... into the safety of darkness. But he could not hide. There was no escape from the horror that pursued him. A *Jeff Jones* mini-story.

44

THE MAN OF SPOILING SOUL

There are those who say evil is a tangible thing, something you can touch or smell. *Dino Armani* is a *killer*...and a case in point!

56

JUST LIKE OLD TIMES The plot is *murder*. The unwilling players are assembled. And the bloody stage is set. But there is someone *unexpected* waiting in the wings!

CONCERNING OUR MAIL ORDER ADVERTISEMENTS: Warren Publishing Co. guarantees the delivery and satisfaction of all items advertised in this issue. Should you need to write us concerning an order, whether it be from our address or a Post Office Box address, send your letter to: E.C. Ives, Customer Service Dept., Warren Publishing Co., 145 E. 32nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10016.



"The Corben art continually boggles my mind!"

I sit here with VAMPIRELLA #30 before me, and I am totally amazed at the new things that keep springing up in the Warren line. The first recent change was the color sections. Not satisfied with 'just' color spreads, you turn in the next big advance, **Richard Corben!** The Corben art continually boggles my mind! And yet, this is still not all. We are now to be placed in the almost staggering position of once again witnessing a step forward for Warren-kind in the long-awaited (but greatly appreciated) return of **Frank Frazetta**. Now that Frazetta is back, I hope whoever draws the interiors on "Luana" will complement Frazetta's cover art.

One is now forced to wonder what new wizardry is brewing in the minds of the people at Warren!

STEVEN JOHN
Wichita, Kan.

Just a short note to tell you that VAMPIRELLA #30 was sensational. "Memoirs of a Killer" was just great, and I loved "Pantha." "Captain Death" was simply maddening! You should have more great stories like these.

CONNIE GILBERT
Grosse Pointe, Mich.

Your magazine has hit some Loew points lately, due to some pretty nice stories by **Flaxman Loew**, who is certainly a very able successor to **Archie Goodwin**. He adds dimension to the personality of VAMPIRELLA as an individual, as a member of an alien race, and as a woman. Far out, **Flax!** (By the way, what's your real name?) I must agree with **Alcyne Elliot**, though. She believed, more or less, that **Adam Van Helsing** is a necessary element in making your stories more interesting. Although I would like to see more of Adam, I don't want to see him (or his father and Pandy) in every single issue. A little moderation, please. And judging from fan reaction in recent letter columns, this seems to be your best course of action.

Auraleon is doing a nice job with the "Pantha" series. His first installment in VAMPI #30 was far out! And **Fernando Fernandez**... need I say more? "Captain Death" was very strange, and I can hardly wait to read "Luana."

Say, VAMPI. Rumor has it that yet a fifth Warren mag will soon be out. Any comment?

STEVEN SCHEIBNER
Jackson Heights, N.Y.

The 'rumor' is true, and the magazine is THE SPIRIT. In case your newsstand is sold out, you can order a copy directly from WARREN PUBLISHING.

VAMPI, you really outdid yourself in issue #30. Tell me, is "Pantha" going to become a regular in your mag? I certainly hope so. "As Though They Were Living" was great! Keep **Rich Corben** until he dies, and maybe even after that. His art is the best in the history of your mag. The rest of the stories were 'Grade A.' As for the vampire-toothed worms of Spain, I'd never heard of them.

Keep "History of Vampires" coming! And finally, in "God of Blood," how do you pronounce **Huitzilopochtli**?

FREDDY COLE
Centerville, Ga.

Well, to answer the easy question first, **Huitzilopochtli** is pronounced "Wits-ill-o-pock-tul-i." And yes, "Pantha" will be a regular feature in VAMPIRELLA.

Sanjulian is just about the all-time greatest Warren cover artist. But when I read the latest edition of "Vampi's Vault," I almost fell over. **Frank Frazetta** is back. For me and probably a lot of others, Frazetta is a 'complete' artist. His paperback book illustrations and Warren work are unsurpassed. Covers like VAMPI #7 and CREEPY #7 cannot be topped by anyone!

So in case I haven't made it clear, welcome back **Frank Frazetta!**

JOE GUBOCKI
Tucson, Ariz.

In all honesty, I am worried about the way in which the character of my favorite vampiress is being handled. The idea of a subconscious mental block against taking human life would, I feel, destroy the mystery and allure of VAMPIRELLA. I believe that a great deal of her popularity is due to the contrasts in her personality. She is more than just a beautiful heroine. Our VAMPI is different because with every spin of the globe, she might (and occasionally does) change suddenly from that beautiful, gentle woman to a savage, unreasoning killer, a danger to all around her. Including those for whom she cares.

VAMPI'S inner-struggle is an interesting one to follow, as are the exploits with her comrades. And fears about what she has done before and may do again at any time are what make her more than just a comic strip character. Take this quality away from VAMPIRELLA, and she will lose her uniqueness.

SCOTT STANSBURY
Seattle, Wa.

Well, you folks down at **Warren Publishing** blew it again. I have become very attached to VAMPI's bat tattoo. In VAMPIRELLA #30, **Jose Gonzalez** (who, I think, is the best comic artist around) failed to include the little tattoo. Just wanted to let you know!

Generally, the artwork in this issue was excellent. Except on the cover, that is, where **Enrich** made VAMPIRELLA look as if she's put on a little weight. I hope this isn't so. Also, he forgot the bracelet on VAMPI's left wrist. But I don't want you to think that all I did was go mistake-hunting! **Steve Skeates'** story "Pantha: Rebirth" was very good, and all in all, VAMPI #30 was a very fine issue.

FRANK NUNEZ
Sanger, Cal.

Although I've been a comic book collector for years, and purchase over fifty different comics each month, yours is the first magazine to which I am writing.

Generally speaking, your cover artist, **Enrich**, is the greatest artist in the business, and the writers who produce your stories should give themselves a hearty pat on the back. So no complaint there. But issue #30 just didn't have enough of VAMPI in it! Only twelve pages of story! How about a special issue with a full-length VAMPIRELLA adventure.

MOISIS MELENDEZ
Brooklyn, N.Y.

I think your mag is just about the finest in the world because of the super color and the super stories!

As for issue #30, "The God of Blood" was good, but bring back Adam and his father.

"Pantha" is one wild character, and I'm glad **Steve Skeates** is scripting her. No other writer could do her justice. And **Auraleon's** art was the best I've ever seen it!

"As Though They Were Living" was the greatest in terms of art and coloring, and the story wasn't bad either! "Memoirs of a Killer" and "Captain Death" weren't that great storywise, but the art was good. C'mon! **Flaxman Loew** has got to be a pseudonym. No one has a name like that!

Personally, I'd like to see some change in VAMPI's attire as **Shiela Thorton** of Brooklyn suggested. I'd like to see VAMPI in hot pants and in many other different styles of clothing as well. By the way, I can tell "Luana" is gonna be one far-out chick!

STEVE HORNBECK
Lake Katrine, N.Y.



Competition for VAMPI? Some of our readers seem to think so. Her name is Susan, and she's the brutal PANTHA. Her third adventure is featured in this issue of VAMPIRELLA.

"Keep 'History of Vampires'"

I think that **VAMPIRELLA** #30 was excellent. I have only recently started collecting your magazine, but it's already one of my favorites! My other favorites, of course, are **CREEPY** and **EERIE**.

TIM MODERSOHN
Bolingbrook, Ill.

A number of interesting comments appeared in the fan page of **VAMPIRELLA** #30, and I'd like to take this opportunity to express my own feelings on the subject in question.

Those who are against the return of Adam Van Helsing and his father, to the **VAMPIRELLA** series, have valid arguments. A few of them might go as follows:

1) Tying **VAMPI** down to Adam would restrict her independence and thus put our heroine in a rut. I disagree. Back in earlier issues, she was very involved with Adam, and a few of the dangers they faced together were among the best: Pope Verdou, W.W. Wade, Father Jonas.

2) An emotional bond with Adam would reduce her effectiveness as the focal point for a story. I doubt this. If anything, a relationship with Adam, either as a lover or friend, would add to the impact of each story. Not only could an author develop the plot, but the **VAMPI**/Adam relationship as well.

3) Adam's father would oppose such a relationship. I don't know about this one. Certainly, in the earlier stories he would have. However, the situation has since changed. I think he accepts **VAMPI** for what she is... although I don't know if he'd want her for a daughter-in-law!

Now on to issue #30. All I can say is **terrific!** In addition to some great stories and artwork (Rich Corben's art on "As Though They Were Living" was exceptionally good), Mr. Flaxman Loew once again gave us a superior story in "The God of Blood." I'll be chewing my fingernails down to the knuckles waiting for the second half of the story!

NORMAN E. DAVISON
Union, N.J.

I just wanted to let you know that **VAMPIRELLA** #30 was really great! Keep running the color sections by Rich Corben. I have followed Corben from the underground to the overground and he is getting better all the time. I think your magazines are maturing into something really special. Way to go, **VAMPI**!

MIKE PHILLIPS
Tornado, W. Va.

I've been reading your magazines now for about six years on an irregular basis. When I cruise on down to the magazine store in our town, the first thing I do is check to see if they've gotten the new **VAMPIRELLA**. Of course, if I find myself face-to-face with **UNCLE CREEPY** or **COUSIN EERIE**, you can bet your eye-teeth I wouldn't pass 'em up!

Some of my friends think I'm stupid and immature for buying such 'trash,' as they call it. Well, I don't think I'm 'stupid' for wanting to read some of the finest and most enjoyable horror fiction around. And I'm certainly no more immature than they. All they seem to be interested in are car books and motorcycle magazines. So, big deal! I'd rather look at **VAMPIRELLA** than a hunk of metal.

I really dig settling down with a new issue and letting my mind run wild. Sometimes I read a particular tale two or three times if it's well-executed. I think Jose Gonzalez is the most excellent artist in the great lineup of Warren artists. He makes **VAMPI** literally jump off the page with realism. She almost strikes me as being a real person instead of just a cartoon character. Once in a while the stories themselves need work, but all in all, I find myself most absorbed in what I'm reading. Which brings me to the point of this letter.

I had just come home from a date with a new girl I'd met, and asked her if she'd come in for some coffee and cake. It was rather late, but she agreed. I never mentioned to her that I read your magazine because of some foolish notion that girls just weren't into that sort of thing. Was I ever wrong! While I got the goodies ready, she found a pile of **VAMPI**'s on my desk. I was shocked to find that she not only approved of your mags, but was an avid fan herself! We then started what must have been one of the longest discussions in history on the Warren magazines.

So all I can say is, thanks for the perfect finale to a great evening!

CHRISTOPHER STEPHAN
Maywood, N.J.

It's our pleasure, Chris! Only next time, why not invite us all for coffee and cake?

Your latest magazine, **VAMPIRELLA** #30, was tops! And I'm already waiting for the next issue, just as I do every month. **VAMPI**, you're great! But why aren't you weekly?

JOHN W. ALLEN
Alamagordo, N.M.



Our heroine in the arms of the Sun-God **HUITZILOPOCHTLI**. The **JOSE GONZALEZ** illustration is from the very well-received **FLAXMAN LOEW** tale "God of Blood" in **VAMPI** #30.

I have just purchased **VAMPIRELLA** #30 and have but one comment to make. Get rid of 'Luana' before she even takes shape! Squash her in some less worthy rag, but keep her away from **VAMPIRELLA**! Judging by the back cover illo, she looks to be a bore! She looks ugly. And even if she's not, we don't need a tiger-chick competing for space with **VAMPIRELLA**! If I wanted that type of story I'd buy a book with any number of inferior jungle guys and gals in it. Save your magazine for the same sort of excellent stories you've been running thus far!

RICK NIEBER
Maynard, Mass.

You've obviously been with us long enough to know that we wouldn't run anything in **VAMPIRELLA** (or any of our other magazines) that didn't meet with our high standards of excellence. So give our jungle ms. a chance, okay?

Normally, my literary preference is toward those works by authors of high caliber such as **Edgar Rice Burroughs**, **H.G. Wells**, **Arthur C. Clarke**, and so on. In a nutshell, I like a good science fiction story. But now that I'm in the service, I find myself cut off from most of the science fiction I like. So I've looked toward new horizons, and find your **VAMPIRELLA** magazine a rather enjoyable substitute. As of now I have only three of your magazines, but through back-issues and a subscription I'm hoping to increase that quantity.

About the only thing wrong with **VAMPIRELLA** #30 was the story "Memoirs of a Killer." If you recall the killings in and around Ann Arbor, Mich. (I live not far from there), you may understand my feelings. Other than that, the issue was well-done and thought-provoking.

MARC B. PELTON
Ft. Jackson, S.C.

IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG WINTER! ESPECIALLY IF YOU DON'T WRITE!

Seems not enough of you are writing and **VAMPI**'s been in the dumps all week. Help an ailing vampiress today—WRITE!

The address is:
SCARLET LETTERS
c/o Warren Publishing Co.
145 East 32nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10016

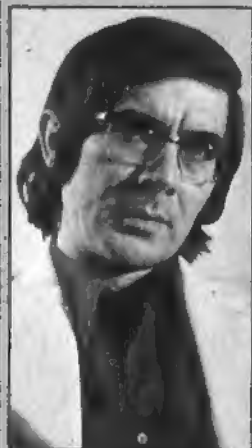


VAMPIRE'S VAULT

THE DEMONIC STORY OF DEVILISH DELINEATOR

RAMON TORRENTS

WILDLY IMAGINATIVE FANTASY ARTICLE



naut or a fireman, Ramon was busy writing and drawing his own comic stories. These, he notes with some sarcasm, were sent to publishers who encouraged him to practice.

"My stories were filed away, forever," Ramon commented.

But the young Ramon was not discouraged. He pursued his chosen career with a feverish determination to master all forms of artistic rendering. And a decade later, at the ripe old age of twenty, he began freelancing in a professional capacity for magazines the world over.

Despite being in great demand, Ramon found time to sate the stirrings of his imagination by bringing the fantastic "Five For Infinity" to pictorial life. This was a series later carried on by fellow Spaniard, the very talented Esteban Maroto (profiled in EERIE #38).

An intense, dedicated artist, we predict Ramon Torrents a strong contender for future plaudits from fantasy fans and fellow professionals alike.

Readers of CREEPY, EERIE, and VAMPIRELLA first became aware of Ramon Torrents with the 51st issue of CREEPY. Ramon went on to win the 1973 Warren Award as Best All Around Artist and has been featured regularly in all Warren titles since.

Ramon was born in Barcelona 35 years ago, and admits that very early in life he became familiar with what have long been his favorite subjects: sciencefiction and fantasy. So it was, at the age of ten, that when most boys dream of one day becoming an astro-



Ramon Torrents' on Satan's power over earth. From "Demon Child," in VAMPIRELLA #26.

YOU'RE PAYING MORE FOR WARREN MAGAZINES THIS MONTH. WE THINK YOU OUGHT TO KNOW WHY.

As with almost everything these days, the price of our magazines has just risen. Unfortunately the price rise was inevitable and unavoidable. During the past year the price of printing and paper has gone up phenomenally. And in 1974 these prices will continue to rise as newsprint paper remains in short supply.

The cost of living is also rising. And with it we must raise the rates we currently pay our contributors, our artists and writers.

To offset these additional costs we have had to add to the cover price of this magazine.

But we are not asking our readers to pay extra for the same WARREN Magazine. We've added eight additional pages to our books. Eight more pages of the very best stories and art published in comics today.

Instead of the usual 64 pages in each issue of CREEPY and VAMPIRELLA you'll now receive 72 inside pages. Our EERIE magazine remains 72 pages—but with an added 8 pages of color comics each issue.

Our subscription prices remain the same, and we hope we'll not be forced to change these rates.

So, while you may be paying a little more for your WARREN Magazines, we can promise you two things each time you purchase an issue: first, you'll be getting the absolute best in comics; the very finest stories and art being published today. Second, we guarantee that the magazine you buy will substantially increase in value—as have all the WARREN Magazines since the first issue of our first magazine, over 15 years ago.

One final word about our competition. Their magazines cost less. We read them, and we think they're worth less. One competitor continually shouts about their so-called 'brand name.' They've been publishing 20¢ comics for a long time and they would have you believe that their black and white comics are good because their 'brand name' has been around for quite a while.

Don't be fooled.

Don't take brand names for what they aren't. Particularly in comics. Compare us with our competitors. Judge for yourself the level of quality and style. Yes, they cost less—but a publisher cannot cut costs without cutting value to the reader.

We think our readers prefer the extra value and the extra quality. And that's exactly the kind of magazine we're going to publish.

FANZINE REVIEWS

FANZINES are amateur publications produced by comic book fans, geared to an audience with a similar interest in comics. They contain a diversity of material, from historical articles on comics of the past, to discussions of current comics and news of comics yet to come! Fanzines are available only by MAIL, direct from their publishers! We think you'll enjoy reading some of the better examples from the present fanzine market!

DARK FANTASY

Box 1185
Genanogue, Ontario.
\$1.25

Obviously a labor of love, Dark Fantasy is a 66-page publication that features striking artwork and sports, interesting short stories and poetry by primarily Canadian authors. Dark Fantasy declares itself, "The Magazine of Amateur Creators," and while this label is not wholly accurate, the book does indeed suffer from a lack of firm editorial control. The stories are allowed to run on interminably, and their hodge-podge organization leaves something to be desired. But there is food for thought.

QUINTESSENCE

1723 West Spofford
Spokane, Wash. 99205
\$1.00

Quintessence is a well-researched, intelligent magazine of comics and fantasy. John Achziger has assembled a magnificent collection of articles on Perry Rhodan, Conan, Zorro, and Star Trek, a striking and beautifully tongue-in-cheek Dennis Fujitake portfolio of super heroines, and an interesting barbarian strip called The Mighty Ronthur. The quality of the printing leaves much to be desired, but the book is well-worth the one dollar investment. Yours to digest for \$1.

CPL

4010 Mallway Dr. Apt. A
Indianapolis, Ind. 46236
35¢

CPL is a magazine devoted entirely to comic book literature. The quality of the artwork is good, and the list of professional contributors is impressive. There's a fine review of the new Star Trek cartoon series, and there are some interesting notes on the effect of the paper shortage on the comics industry. But only the "Revival-Survival" column is of a professional caliber. CPL features illustrations enough of comic characters to satisfy even the most rabid connoisseur of Pictorial Literature.

VAMPIRELLA

TWO MEN SPIN THE WHEEL OF **CHANCE!**
BOTH, GAMBLING FOR THE MIGHTIEST
OF ALL STAKES... THEIR **LIVES!**

ONLY ONE MAN CAN **WIN...**
WHILE THE OTHER PLUMETS
HEADLONG TOWARDS HIS **DEATH...**

...TOWARDS THE SHARP DEADLY
SPIKES THAT NOW PROTRUDE
FROM HIS LIFELESS BODY!

CAUGHT IN THE **VORTEX** OF **PASSION, DESIRE** AND **HATE**, THE DELICIOUS CREATURE
FROM THE VAMPIRE PLANET OF **DRAKULON** WITNESSES THE GHASTLY AFTERMATH OF
THE GAME THAT MUST END IN TRAGEDY WHEN THE LAWS OF **CHANCE** AND **PROBABILITY**
ARE FUSED IN THE PHENOMENON OF...

THE RUNNING RED



MY GOD!
HE... HE
KILLED
HIMSELF!

JUMPED FROM
THAT BALCONY...
ONTO... ONTO
THOSE HORRID
STAKES...!

BUT
WHY?

WHY?

IT WAS A NIGHT OF
HORROR IN THE
GLITTERING DIAMOND-
STARRED **RIVIERA!**

IT BEGAN AT THE
GAMBLING TABLES OF
THE **GREAT CASINO...**

THE TENSION IN THE SALON PRIVÉ OF *THE GREAT CASINO* IS OF THE KIND YOU COULD CUT WITH A KNIFE.

THERE'S *BIG* MONEY ON THE TABLE. A YOUNG MAN IS SWEATING. HIS *GUTS* ARE TURNING OVER WITH THE TERROR OF *PROBABLE RUINATION*.

A CROAKING, MOCKING VOICE FROM THE MAN IN THE WHEELCHAIR STEELS HIS NERVE TO MAKE ANOTHER PLAY.

HE SWEEPS ANOTHER PILE OF PLAQUES ON... *BLACK...*



MAKE YOUR PLAY, BOY! WHY DO YOU HESITATE? YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE!

WHO IS THAT *CRAZY* YOUNG MAN?

RUPERT VANDYCK...OF THE PHILADELPHIA VANDYCKS. HIS OLD MAN'S BAILED HIM OUT OF THREE MARRIAGES AND TWO BANKRUPTCIES! BUT I RECKON TONIGHT'S THE END OF THE TRAIL FOR LITTLE RUPIE-BOY!



A FINAL *CLICK-CLICK-CLICK...* AND THE BALL ROLLS TO A *RED NUMBER*!



AND THAT EVIL-LOOKING CREATURE WHO'S LEADING HIM ON?

JABEZ KRUGER THE ARMS MAGNATE! QUIET NOW, THE WHEEL'S SLOWING DOWN!

AAAAAAAHH! I'VE LOST THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION DOLLARS IN *FOUR* SPINS OF THE WHEEL!



NO! NO-O-O-O!
EEEEEEEEEEHH!



THE GREAT PENDRAGON, ILLUSIONIST EXTRAORDINARY, AND HIS RAVISHING ASSISTANT **VAMPIRELLA** ARE APPEARING IN CABARET AT THE CASINO RESTAURANT!

THAT **KRUGER**...THAT **SADISTIC MONSTER**! HE TAUNTED AND LURED THAT POOR BOY TO HIS DEATH! AND **NOW** YOU TELL ME WE'RE BOOKED TO DO A SHOW AT HIS PRIVATE VILLA!

IT'S A DATE WE CAN'T AVOID, **VAMPI** DEAR. SURE, COULD SNUB **KRUGER**, BUT THE DOORS OF EVERY THEATRE AND CABARET IN EUROPE WOULD SLAM IN OUR FACES WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

WHEN I THINK OF THAT BOY'S DYING MOANS...

DON'T, **VAMPI** DEAR! I FEEL THE SPIRIT **EBBING** OUT OF ME!

HIGH IN HIS LUXURY VILLA ABOVE THE GLITTERING TOWN, **KRUGER** IS AT BUSINESS.

I HAVE THE GREATEST ADMIRATION FOR A GAMBLER, SENOR. BY ALL MEANS START A REVOLUTION IN YOUR COUNTRY, AND I WILL SUPPLY YOU WITH ARMS...AT EIGHT PERCENT DISCOUNT.

A MILLION THANKS, SENOR. WHEN MY UNHAPPY COUNTRY IS LIBERATED FROM THE HEEL OF THE TYRANT, YOUR STATUE SHALL STAND IN THE PLAZA.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!

WHEN HIS VISITOR HAS GONE...

WIRE THE MINISTER OF WAR IN **GUARDIA**.

GIVE HIM A PRECIS OF MY CONVERSATION WITH THAT **MINDLESS MORON**. TELL HIM THE REVOLUTIONARIES WILL BE SUPPLIED WITH SUB-STANDARD ARMS...AND THAT I SHALL EXPECT A GOVERNMENT ORDER FOR FIFTY OF MY FIGHTER PLANES WITH THE VERTICAL TAKE-OFF CAPABILITY...

AND NOW, MY DEAR **DROGA**... TIME FOR **RELAXATION**. CUT THE CARDS! ACES HIGH! IF YOU WIN, I WILL GIVE YOU AN **EMERALD NECKLACE** THAT ONCE GRACED THE THROAT OF THE **TSARINA CATHERINE THE GREAT**, WHOM YOU RESEMBLE IN MANY **PARTICULARS**...

AND IF I LOSE, **JABEZ**?

...THERE WILL BE THE USUAL **RAKE-OFF** FOR HIS EXCELLENCY!



THE *USUAL*
DELICIOUS FORFEITS,
MY DEAR....

WHO NEEDS
ANY OLD
NECKLACE?

ONE FIGURE...AND ONE FIGURE ALONE, APPEARS
ON THE DECK OF THE SPLENDID VESSEL. A MAN
WITHOUT A NAME! HE IS KNOWN IN THE HIGHFLOUN,
DIZZY WORLD OF THE *INTERNATIONAL LOTUS-
EATERS* AS, SIMPLY, "*THE TRAVELLER*."



VAMPIRELLA SEES *HIM* ACROSS
A CROWDED ROOM...



...MADAME
DROGA, MY...
COMPANION...

ENCHANTED!

NEXT DAY, AT COCKTAIL HOUR, EVERY EYE IN THE
HARBOR. IS DIRECTED TOWARDS A *SUPER-YACHT*
THAT GLIDES SILENTLY TO ITS MOORING. BORED AND
PAMPERED VOICES RISE IN A SHRILL CLAMOR OF
EXCITEMENT.



IT'S...*HIM*!

I LAST
SAW HIM IN
RIO!

SUDDENLY I
FEEL *WANTON*!
GIVE ME ANOTHER
DRINK SOMEBODY!

THAT NIGHT, VAMPI AND PENDRAGON ARRIVE AT THE
VILLA ROUGE ET NOIR, JABEZ KRUGER'S
SENSATIONAL PAD ABOVE TOWN.



THE ARTISTES OF THE
CABARET?...THIS WAY,
PLEASE.

THEIR EYES MEET. A COSMIC FORCE PASSES BETWEEN
THEM. WORLDS COLLIDE IN THE HEART OF THE LONELY,
LOVELY GIRL FROM DRAKULON! A SMALL BIRD SINGS A
PURE, HIGH NOTE OF JOY.



THEY ENTERTAIN THE ARMS MAGNATE AND HIS GUESTS. BUT VAMPIRELLA ONLY HAS EYES FOR... HIM...

MY BEAUTIFUL ASSISTANT WILL NOW VANISH...
SO!

SO!

SO!!...FOR THE LOVE O' MIKE, VAMPI, ARE YOU TRYING TO DRIVE ME TO DRINK?

AFTERWARDS...

THEY TELL ME THAT YOU, ALSO, ARE A GAMBLING MAN.

GAMBLING HAS BEEN A **RULING** PASSION FOR...ALL OF MY LIFETIME.

AND MINE! I HAVE DEVISED A GAME THAT MIGHT **AMUSE** YOU. TO PLAY, YOU SIMPLY NEED A POTENTIAL CAPITAL OF **FIFTY MILLION FRANCS**... PLUS A **STEADY NERVE!** DOES THE PROPOSITION PLEASE YOU?

WHEN DO WE PLAY?

THE SALON PRIVÉ OF THE CASINO... TOMORROW NIGHT... SHALL WE SAY, AFTER DINNER?

THE LOOK IS FOR KRUGER, BUT VAMPIRELLA KNOWS THAT THE WORDS ARE FOR... **HER!**

TOMORROW NIGHT... WE SHALL MEET AGAIN!

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS CRAWL PAST ON LEADENED FEET. THEN, ALL AT ONCE, HER HEART IS BEATING LIKE THAT OF A HUNTED FAUN. THE CHIMES OF THE HOTEL DE VILLE RING OUT THE HOUR OF EIGHT. THERE IS A TAP ON HER DOOR...

CAR WAITING FOR YOU OUTSIDE THE MAIN ENTRANCE, MA'AM.

OH...! THANK YOU.

THERE IS SIMPLY THE WHISPER OF THE WAVES AND THE LILTING NOTES OF AN ORCHESTRA IN A FAR-OFF BALLROOM, AS SHE ALIGHTS BY *THE YACHT OF "THE TRAVELLER."*

NOT A SOUL ON BOARD. NO SAILORS ... NO ONE.



IN THE VAST SALOON, SHE FINDS... *HIM!*

YOU CAME!

YOU KNEW I WOULD!



NOTHING ABOUT ME... OR ABOUT MY SHIP... SURPRISES YOU. I KNEW YOU WERE NOT A CREATURE OF *THIS* WORLD!

AND I SENSED THAT YOU WERE... *DIFFERENT!*



THERE IS NO FEAR IN THE HEART OF THE LOVELY DRAKULONNE! NOT EVEN WHEN A *HAND* MATERIALIZES AND GIVES HER A DRINK.



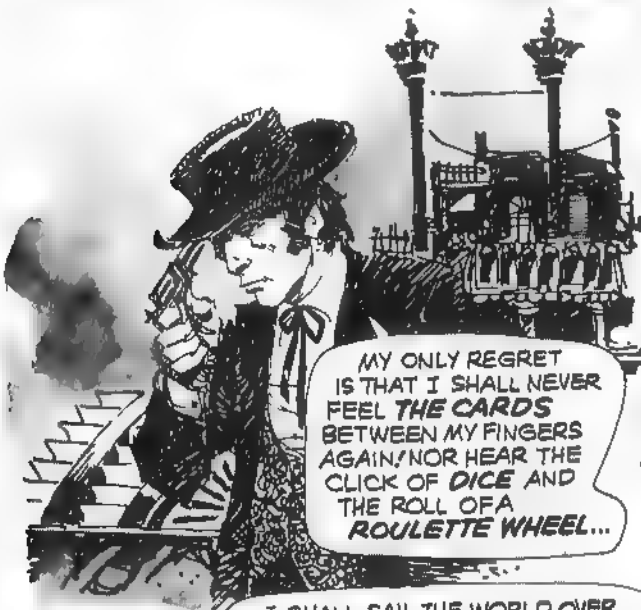


TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

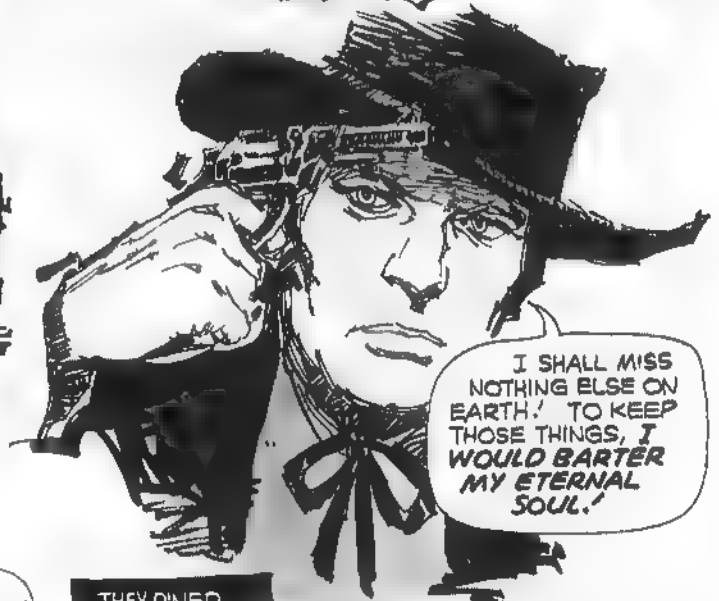
I AM A GAMBLER. I WAS ALWAYS A GAMBLER...



"ONE NIGHT, I STAKED MY ALL ON THE TURN OF A CARD. MY FORTUNE, MY LOVED ONE, MY HONOR... AND LOST."



MY ONLY REGRET IS THAT I SHALL NEVER FEEL **THE CARDS** BETWEEN MY FINGERS AGAIN, NOR HEAR THE CLICK OF **DICE** AND THE ROLL OF A **ROULETTE WHEEL**...



I SHALL MISS NOTHING ELSE ON EARTH. TO KEEP THOSE THINGS, I WOULD BARTER MY ETERNAL SOUL.

YOU MEAN..?

I SHALL SAIL THE WORLD OVER, TILL THE END OF TIME, INDULGING MY **OBSESSION**. ALREADY I HAVE GAINED... AND LOST... UNCOUNTED FORTUNES. YOU SEE, MY DEAR, THE WISH I EXPRESSED ON THAT MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOAT ALL THOSE YEARS AGO WAS **GRANTED**!



THEY DINED...

YOU'LL BEAT KRUGER TONIGHT. HE DESERVES IT. HE DROVE A FOOLISH YOUNG MAN TO A HORRIBLE DEATH! AND THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT OTHER **EVIL** HE'S DONE. THE STENCH OF **DECAYING ROTTENNESS** HANGS OVER HIM!

I'LL BEAT HIM... FOR YOUR SAKE, VAMPIRELLA!



THEY ARRIVE TOGETHER
AT THE CASINO.

BY COURTESY OF THE
CASINO DIRECTORS, WE HAVE
THE LOAN OF THIS TABLE AND ITS
CROUPIER, FOR OUR PERSONAL
USE. TONIGHT WE ARE
NOT PLAYING AGAINST
THE BANK, BUT
AGAINST EACH
OTHER!

EXPLAIN YOUR
GAME.

WE PLAY RED AGAINST
BLACK, AT EVEN ODDS, A
HUNDRED THOUSAND
FRANCS A SPIN. THE LOSER
HAS TO **DOUBLE** HIS FOLLOW-
ING STAKE. THE FIRST TO
LOSE HIS FORTUNE...OR HIS
NERVE...IS THE LOSER
OF THE GAME!

I WILL
PLAY ON
RED!

AND I ON
BLACK!

THE WHEEL SPINS. THE BALL
COMES DOWN ON A **RED**
NUMBER.

PITY! NOW
I DOUBLE MY
STAKE...**TWO**
HUNDRED THOUSAND
FRANCS!

RED COMES UP AGAIN...AND AGAIN...AND AGAIN! KRUGER'S
STAKE ROCKETS UP IN MATHEMATICAL PROPORTION... 400,000
FRANCS... 800,000 FRANCS 1,600,000 FRANCS!

THE NEWS SPREADS LIKE A FOREST FIRE THROUGHOUT THE CASINO,
OUT INTO THE NIGHT STREETS AND THROUGH THE THROBBING TOWN!
THE LAWS OF CHANCE AND PROBABILITY HAVE, FOR AN INCALCULABLE
TIME, BEEN SUSPENDED! THERE'S A **RUN OF RED!**

NEVER IN THE LONG AND BIZARRE HISTORY OF THE CASINO HAVE SUCH STAKES BEEN ON THE GREEN BAIZE.

JABEZ, YOU CAN'T GO ON

LIKE THIS, YOU'VE SUNK OVER SIX MILLION FRANCS!

SHUT YOUR MOUTH, WOMAN!

RED HAS NOW COME UP SEVEN TIMES IN SUCCESSION...EIGHT...NINE...

PLAYING AGAIN, KRUGER?

THE TENTH TIME THAT RED COMES UP, THE ARMS MAGNATE HAS LOST 51,200,000 FRANCS!!

YOU HAVE BEATEN ME, TRAVELLER...

I...I'M RUINED!

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING LEFT TO STAKE, IN ONE MORE SPIN OF THE WHEEL, AGAINST YOUR LOSSES?

YES! YES, BY ALL THE DEVILS IN HELL, I HAVE!

I STAKE HER!

AAAAAAH! NO! NO...YOU CAN'T MEAN IT!

I ACCEPT THE STAKE! SPIN THE WHEEL, CROUPIER!

THE RUNNING RED CONTINUES... FOR THE ELEVENTH TIME!

COME, MY DEAR. TIME FOR US TO LEAVE HERE.

WHAT... WHAT ABOUT HER?

KEEP HER, KRUGER, WITH MY COMPLIMENTS! SHE WILL MAKE AN ADMIRABLE COMPANION IN YOUR NEW-FOUND POVERTY!

DROGA...

GO AFTER HIM! GET HIM... CUT HIM... DESTROY HIM!

GOOD BYE, KRUGER... SAVE A PLACE FOR ME IN HELL!

AAAAAAAH!

YOU SOLD ME... SOLD ME LIKE A SLAVE! HE WON ME... AND HE THREW ME BACK AT YOU LIKE A WORN-OUT GLOVE! YOU LET THIS HUMILIATION HAPPEN TO ME!!

G-E-E-E AAAAAH...

WALKING BACK TO THE **TRAVELLER'S** YACHT, THROUGH THE MIMOSA-SCENTED NIGHT...

KRUGER'S FINISHED FOR-
EVER NOW, AND
THE WORLD'S A
CLEANER
PLACE.

I ENJOYED THE
EXPERIENCE. I ENJOYED
PLEASING YOU AND DOING
THE WORLD A GOOD TURN.
HEDONISM ISN'T
ENOUGH...



NEVER MIND THE
DAME! **GET HIM!**



THE BEAUTIFUL **DRAKULONNE**, WHO CAN ONLY LIVE AS A NORMAL WOMAN BY DRINKING **BLOOD-SUBSTITUTE** SERUM EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, IS IN REALITY A **SHE-VAMPIRE!** NORMALLY SATIATED BY THE SERUM, HER **BLOOD-LUST** BREAKS THROUGH IN TIMES OF **EXTREME STRESS!**

THE FANGS OF THE **VAMPIRESS** REND THROUGH PULSATING JUGULARS! THE RICH, RED BLOOD FLOWS STRONGLY!

EEEEEEHHH...



THOSE CARRION
ARE ACTING ON
KRUGER'S ORDERS!

...I WILL DRAIN
THEM DRY!

THE TRAVELLER'S WOUNDS ARE DEEP-AND **FATAL!**

NO ETERNITY
OF SELF-INDULGENCE
FOR ME NOW, MY
VAMPIRELLA!

IT... IT
CAN'T
BE!

ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT,
TRAVELLER?

ANSWER ME,
MY LOVE...

OOOOOHH!





ONE LAST KISS... TO SEE ME ON MY WAY. THEN... HELP ME TO MY YACHT...

THE TOUCH OF **MORTALITY** IS ALREADY IMPRINTED ON THE FEATURES OF THE **TRAVELLER**.



WHY... WHY?

I BARTERED MY SOUL FOR THE SAKE OF AN OBSESSION. TONIGHT I GAMBLERED FOR REASONS OTHER THAN SELF-INDULGENCE. I HAVE BROKEN MY HALF OF THE BARGAIN... AND I MUST TRAVEL ON...



NOT... MUCH... TIME...

THE MAN WHO WAVES TO HER FROM THE DECK IS ALREADY A **WALKING DEAD MAN!**



AS THE VESSEL GLIDES SILENTLY AWAY INTO THE NIGHT, FLAMES BEGIN TO LICK AT THE SUPERSTRUCTURE. WHAT IS LEFT OF THE MAN WHOM VAMPIRELLA KNEW AND BRIEFLY LOVED IS HEADING OUT TO SEA FOR A **VIKING'S FUNERAL!**



GOOD-BYE... MAY YOU FIND PEACE...

SCREAMING YOUR HEAD OFF BECAUSE YOU'RE MISSING...

VAMPIRELLA

BACK ISSUES



#1901
VAMPI #1
\$3.75



#1902
VAMPI #2
\$3.25



#1904
VAMPI #4
\$3.25



#1905
VAMPI #5
\$2.75



#1906
VAMPI #6
\$2.75



#1907
VAMPI #7
\$2.75



#1908
VAMPI #8
\$2.75



#1909
VAMPI #9
\$2.75



#1910
VAMPI #10
\$2.75



#1911
VAMPI #11
\$2.25



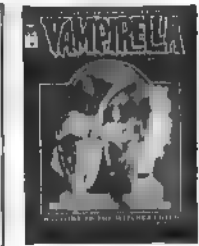
#1912
VAMPI #12
\$2.25



#1913
VAMPI #13
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#1914
VAMPI #14
\$2.25



#1915
VAMPI #15
\$1.75



#1916
VAMPI #16
\$1.75



#1917
VAMPI #17
\$1.75



#1918
VAMPI #18
\$1.75



#1919
VAMPI #19
\$2.00



#1920
VAMPI #20
\$1.50



#1921
VAMPI #21
\$1.50



#1922
VAMPI #22
\$1.50



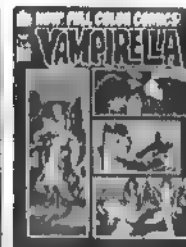
#1923
VAMPI #23
\$1.50



#1924
VAMPI #24
\$1.50



#1925
VAMPI #25
\$1.50



#1926
VAMPI #26
\$1.50



#1927
VAMPI #27
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#1928
VAMPI #28
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VAMPI #30
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**IS YOUR COLLECTION OF THE WORLD'S GRUE-
VIEST COMICS MAGAZINE INCOMPLETE? STOP
GNASHING YOUR FANGS OUT AND ORDER
THOSE MISSING ISSUES NOW!**

When ordering items, please use Order Form, last page of this magazine.

PANTHER



A PANTHER... FREE, BLACK
AND DEADLY, RACES THROUGH
THE VICIOUS JUNGLE KNOWN
AS NEW YORK CITY!

IT LEAPS FROM THE ROTTING,
CROOKED STEPS OF A SLUM
TENEMENT!... THE TENEMENT
WHERE IT JUST MURDERED
TWO AGED AND SLOVENLY
PEOPLE!



BLACK ON WHITE



SOME MAY HAVE
SEEN THE PANTHER...
INCONGRUOUS WITH
IT'S SETTING, RACING
THROUGH TWISTED
STREETS AND ALLEYS!

BUT NONE OBSERVE NOW...
NOW AS THE GLISTENING BLACK
ANIMAL TRANSFORMS INTO
AN EVEN DEADLIER AND MORE
DANGEROUS BEAST...!

ONE WHO SAW THE PANTHER PURSUED ... UNTIL HE COULD KEEP UP NO LONGER ...

DAMN I LOST HER!

AND I'LL NEVER FIND HER AGAIN! NOT IF SHE DOESN'T WANT ME TO!

BUT IT WAS HER! I'M SURE IT WAS!

THAT GIANT CAT IS REALLY A GIRL!

THE SAME GIRL I SAW IN A NIGHT-CLUB!

AND NOW I DO BELIEVE!

TOO MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE THEN FOR THIS TO ALL BE JUST A COINCIDENCE!

THE OLD MAN I MET THERE TOLD ME OF HER ABILITY TO TRANSFORM INTO A PANTHER! I DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM!

THE BEGINNING: AT FIRST, HE HAD BEEN TRANSFIXED... HIS ATTENTION COMPLETELY CAPTURED BY HER HARD AND UNCOMPROMISING SENSUAL BEAUTY...

HE FELT AS THOUGH HE WERE BEING PULLED TOWARD HER... AN IMAGINED UNION FOLLOWED...



... A UNION WHICH WAS SUDDENLY SHATTERED BY AN OLD MAN AND A STORY THAT SEEMED BUT AN ELABORATE LIE...

I'M TELLING YOU! SHE'S MORE THAN JUST A WOMAN! YEARS AGO, SHE LEFT A BAR WITH A MAN I KNEW! AND WHEN THAT MAN'S BODY WAS FOUND...

A RATHER MEANINGLESS EVENING OF AIMLESS FRIVOLITY... OR SO IT WOULD HAVE SEEMED, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE NEWS ITEM HE READ THAT NEXT DAY...

GOD! IT'S THE SAME OLD GUY...

... FOUND TORN TO SHREDS ... AS THOUGH BY SOME SORT OF HUGE CAT!





WHAT AM I DOING OUT HERE?

GOTTA LEARN TO CONTROL THE BEAST IN ME A BIT BETTER THAN THIS!

LEFT MY CLOTHES, MY SUITCASE MY MONEY... EVERYTHING BACK AT THE PLACE!

GOTTA GET BACK THERE... AND FAST... BEFORE SOMEBODY SPOTS ME LIKE THIS!

EVEN AS HE WAS RE-READING THAT NEWS ITEM THERE IN THAT SLEAZY DINER, HE HAD LOOKED UP, AND...

WHA!? IT'S HER!

HE HAD RUSHED OUT, AND, TRYING TO FOLLOW, FINALLY LOST HER! NOW HE WALKS AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE CONCRETE CANYONS, PAST GLITTERING AND BLINKING NEON, LOST IN THOUGHT...

I SUPPOSE I COULD GO TO THE POLICE WITH MY STORY! BUT THEY'D PROBABLY JUST LAUGH AT ME, LIKE I DID WITH THAT OLD GUY!

BESIDES, I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER NAME...

LAUGH? NO, PROBABLY NOT! THE POLICE WOULD VERY PROBABLY BE TRULY INTERESTED IN HIS STORY. FOR THE OLD MAN'S DEATH WAS ONLY THE FIRST! THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER GRISLY MURDERS SINCE THEN! ONLY TWO OF WHICH THE POLICE HAVE YET TO LEARN ABOUT...



...AN ELDERLY, **SLOVENLY** COUPLE,
TORN APART LYING IN POOLS OF
THEIR OWN **BLOOD**... AND THE SHADOW
OF A **LITHE** AND WELL-ROUNDED
FEMALE FORM
FALLING OVER
THIS SCENE OF
WELL-DESERVED
DEATH...

THERE!
GOT 'EM!

NOW I'D BETTER
GET OUT OF HERE!
THERE WAS A DRUNK
IN THE HALLWAY WHEN
I **KILLED THE OLD**
LADY! AND HE
SAW ME DO IT!

I **DOUBT**
IT, BUT HE MAY
HAVE GONE TO
THE **POLICE!**

EVERYTHING
GOT SHOVED
AROUND DURING
THE **STRUGGLE!**
NEED MY CLOTHES
... MY PURSE...

SOON...

STRANGE HOW
MUCH MY LIFE HAS
CHANGED THESE
PAST FEW DAYS!

I'VE FINALLY
STARTED TO
FIGHT BACK...



...AGAINST
EVERYONE WHO
HAS EVER
PUSHED ME
AROUND!

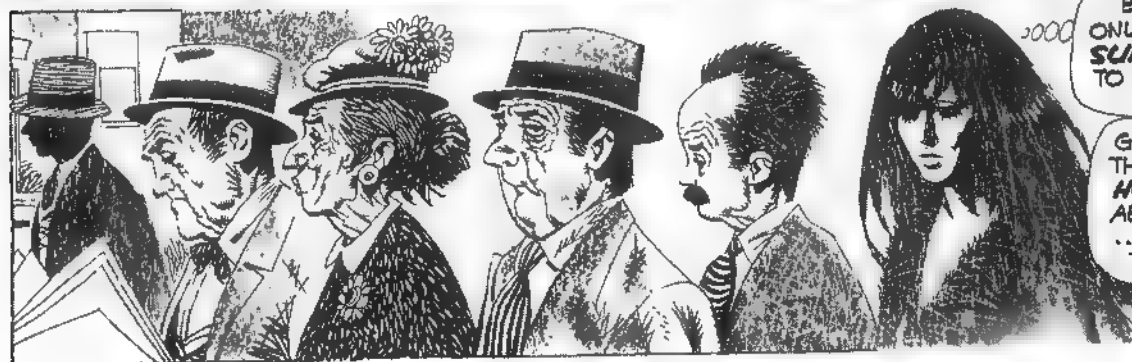
AND MORE
THAN THAT, I'VE
BECOME AN ENTIRE-
LY DIFFERENT
PERSON!

I'M **STRONG**
NOW... AND I'VE
LEARNED THAT I'VE
ALWAYS HAD THE
CAPACITY TO BE
STRONGER THAN
ANYONE WHO FEELS
LIKE KICKING ME
AROUND!



BUT SO FAR, I'VE
ONLY **SCRATCHED THE**
SURFACE! I'VE GOT
TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT THIS!

GOT TO RETURN TO
THAT **FOUNDLING**
HOME, AND LEARN
ABOUT MY **ANCESTRY**
... LEARN **WHY I'M**
THE WAY I AM!



TO LEARN THE **WHOLE** STORY... A STORY THAT RESIDES IN A SUBURBAN **FOUNDLING HOME**... THIS IS YOUR **GOAL!** SO WHY THEN, **PANTHA**, DO YOU NOW SUDDENLY FEEL COMPELLED TO **LEAVE** THE TICKET LINE?



WHY DO YOU FEEL **DRAWN** INTO MOMENTARILY PLACING YOUR BELONGINGS IN A LOCKER?



WHY IS A CERTAIN SUBCONSCIOUS PART OF YOU DIRECTING YOU TO WALK OUT OF THE BUS STATION... TO STEAL OFF INTO THE NEON-SPLASHED **NIGHT?** WHY **PANTHA?** WHY? THERE ARE NO ANSWERS HERE... NO **ANSWERS** ON THIS CHILLY CITY NIGHT!



... BUT NOT TOO FAR AWAY, WE FIND **ANOTHER** WHO IS SEARCHING...



HAVE NO IDEA WHY I **CAME** HERE! I KNOW THE CHANCES OF HER BEING HERE WERE **SLIM**, WHAT WITH ME SEEING HER WALKING ALONG WITH THAT **SUITCASE!**



AND I CAN'T REALLY **ASK AROUND** ABOUT HER...

THESE PLACES ARE RUN BY THE **SYNDICATE**... OR SO I **HEAR!** IT DOESN'T **PAY** TO ASK QUESTIONS IN PLACE LIKE **THIS!**

EXCUSE ME, SIR...

A **WOMAN**... NO, MORE A **GIRL**... EIGHTEEN OR NINETEEN... A PIECE OF OVER-OBVIOUS **BEAUTY** WHO HAD JUST ENOUGH TO **DRINK** SO THAT HER **TOP-HEAVINESS** WAS GETTING THE **BEST** OF HER... SPEAKING IN A LOW, NOT SULTRY BUT **WHISPERY**, VOICE...

PARDON?

I HATE TO **BROTHER** YOU, SIR! BUT THIS IS PART OF MY **JOB!** I'M SUPPOSED TO COME OVER AND GET YOU TO BUY ME A **DRINK!**



HUNH?

EACH OF US
GIRLS HAVE TO GO
AROUND LIKE THIS
AT LEAST **ONCE A
WEEK** AND GET
THE MEN TO BUY
US DRINKS. I
KNOW I'M
**RIPPING YOU
OFF, BUT...**

YOU MEAN YOU
WORK HERE? AS
A **DANCER?**

YES!
BUT...

LISTEN... I COULD JUST SAY THAT YOU
**REFUSED TO BUY ME A DRINK, AND
THAT'LL BE THAT.** AFTER ALL THIS IS
A FANTASTIC
RIP-OFF AND...

**NO! NO!
SIT DOWN!**
I'LL **BUY YOU
THAT DRINK...** IF
I CAN TALK TO
YOU FOR A
WHILE!

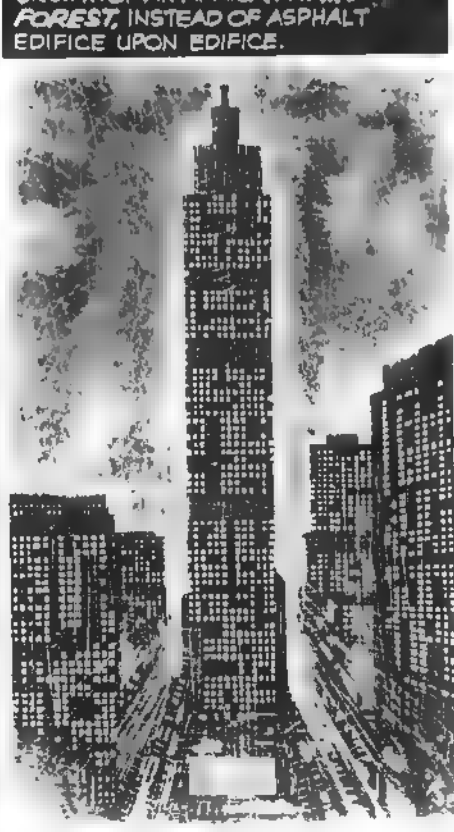
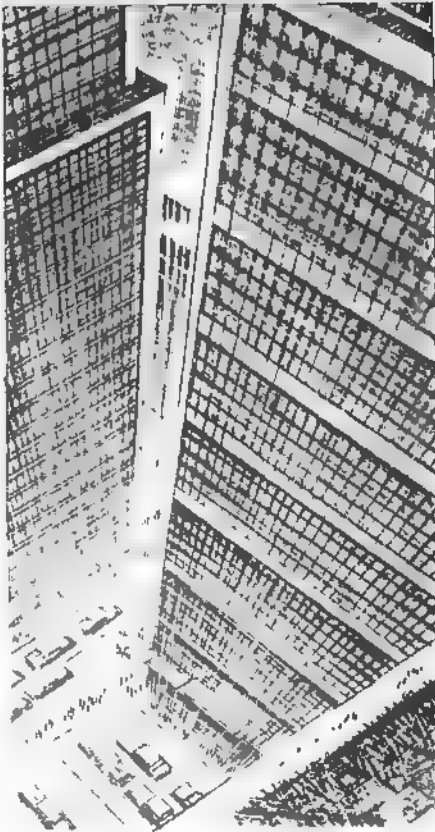
THERE'S THIS
GIRL I'M INTERESTED
IN FINDING OUT A FEW
THINGS ABOUT. SHE
WORKS HERE!

OR, AT
LEAST, SHE WAS
HERE **LAST
NIGHT!**

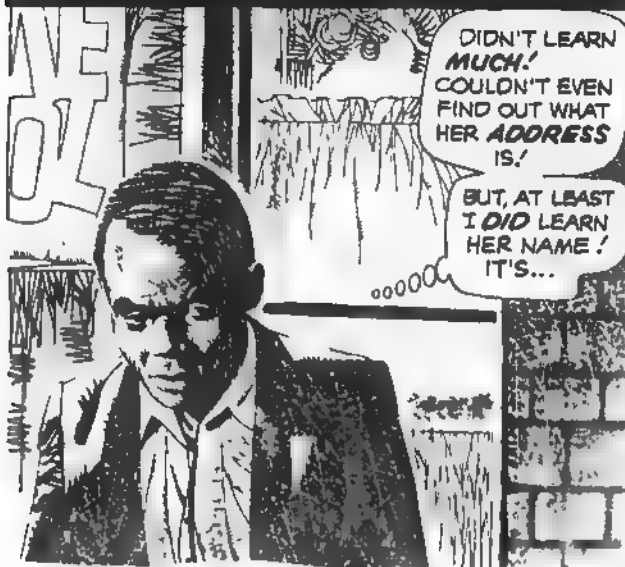
LISTEN, PEOPLE OF THE NIGHT... CAN
YOU **HEAR IT?**... HEAR IT IN YOUR
MIND? THE **VIBRATIONS!** THE
DISTANT BEAT OF **JUNGLE DRUMS!**

DO YOU HEAR THE RUSTLE OF
FOLIAGE... THAT RUMBLING
GROWL? CAN YOU HEAR THE PAD
OF THE PAWS OF A HUGE CAT?

THIS IS A **JUNGLE OF CONCRETE!**
YET IT IS AS THOUGH THE OIL AND
THE SLUDGE ON THE STREETS WERE
NOW REFLECTING THE DENSE
GROWTH OF AN AFRICAN **RAIN
FOREST,** INSTEAD OF ASPHALT
EDIFICE UPON EDIFICE.



WHAT DO THESE VIBRATIONS *MEAN*? IS THIS TO
BECOME A NIGHT OF JUNGLE *MADNESS*?



BUT WHAT NEED DO *WE*
HAVE TO KNOW THE NAME
SHE GOES BY IN THIS
PARTICULAR INCARNATION?
WE ALREADY KNOW HER
FOR WHO SHE *TRULY* IS...



HE SENSES IMPENDING *DOOM*.
HE CANNOT *SHAKE* THE FEELING...



...NOT EVEN WHEN THERE ARE
OTHERS... MANY OTHERS...
AROUND HIM...



...FOR EVEN IN A CROWD, HE IS
ALONE... FEELING SOMETHING
STALKING HIM...



...UNTIL, FINALLY, IT
IS MORE THAN JUST A
FEELING... NOW
THERE ARE *SOUNDS*
AS WELL. WHAT WAS
ONCE JUST A HAZY
IMPRESSION HAS
BECOME SHOOKING
REALITY!



THE **FEAR**... IT BEGINS
DEEP **WITHIN** YOU, DOESN'T
IT? **FEAR**... **GROWING**,
SPREADING FURTHER AND
FURTHER OUT...



...UNTIL IT CONSUMES YOUR **ENTIRE
BEING**... AND YOU ARE NO LONGER A
RATIONAL, THINKING CREATURE. NOW
YOUR **INSTINCTS** HAVE TAKEN OVER...



...TELLING YOU TO RUN **FASTER, FASTER**... AS
STRANGE **IMAGES** FLASH THROUGH YOUR **MIND**...

BOOMLAY



BOOMLAY



...AND WHEN **RUNNING** PROVES **USELESS**... WHEN
YOU INSTINCTIVELY REALIZE THAT THERE SHALL BE
NO ESCAPE... THEN YOU PREPARE FOR THE **FIGHT**.
JUST AS YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR SIMILAR FIGHTS
FOR CENTURY UPON **CENTURY**...

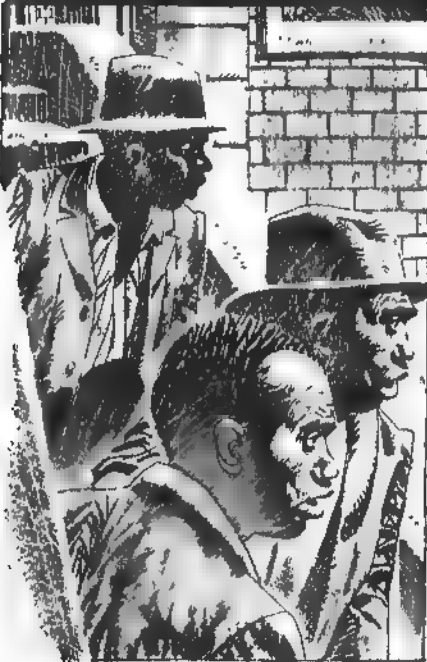


...POSITIONING YOURSELF...
WAITING...
WAITING...

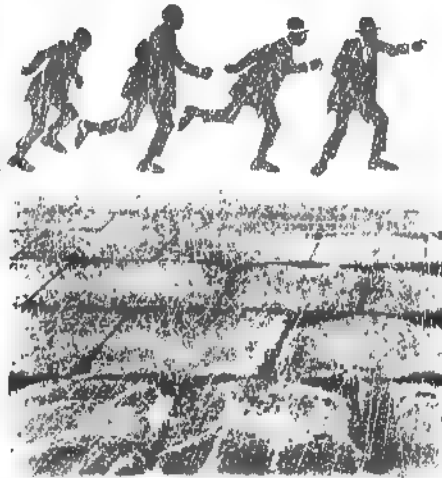
...AND FINALLY STRIKING!



LISTEN, PEOPLE OF THE NIGHT...CAN YOU HEAR IT? THE GROWLS! THE SHRIEKS!



THE SOUND OF CLAWS TEARING INTO FLESH... THE SKUFFLE... THE SCREAMS!



AND FINALLY... THE DEAFENING SILENCE!



IT IS OVER NOW! THE BATTLE HAS ENDED, AND YOU, MAN... YOU ARE THE LOSER!



AND THE **VICTOR** IS NOW **FAR** AWAY... **WEARY**, BUT IF **WOUNDED**, THEN ONLY **SLIGHTLY**...



BEFORE LONG, A **PANTHER** NUZZLES WHAT APPEARS TO BE A DISCARDED **DRESS**...

AND, WITHIN SECONDS, THE **CAT** IS **GONE**, AND A **YOUNG WOMAN** HAS TAKEN ITS PLACE...

IT HAPPENED AGAIN! THAT **OTHER PART** OF ME TOOK OVER!

BUT, AT LEAST THIS TIME, I WAS **SOMEWHAT** IN CONTROL...

...IN CONTROL ENOUGH TO LEAVE MY **CLOTHES** IN A PLACE WHERE I COULD GET THEM BACK!



...IN CONTROL ENOUGH TO LEAVE MY **BELONGINGS** IN A **BUS STATION LOCKER**... SO THAT THEY TOO ARE **SAFE**!

NOW, I CAN **RETURN** TO THE **BUS STATION**... AND GET ON WITH **PAYING** A VISIT TO THAT **FOUNDLING HOME**!

IT'S BEEN A **LONG DAY**! I COULD CERTAINLY USE A **MANICURE**! MY **NAILS** ARE A **MESS**!

AND SOME **REST**! I COULD SURE USE... SOME **SLEEP**!



PRESENTING The 1973 WARREN AWARDS

BEST COVER OF THE YEAR 1973

SANJULIAN

Sanjulian was the best horror cover artist in the business when he came to Warren three years ago. But he's improved tremendously since then. When the Warren staff voted for Best Cover of 1973, the top three choices went to Sanjulian's excellent works.



BEST ART OF THE YEAR 1973

ESTEBAN MAROTO

Esteban Maroto is one of the fastest, most reliable, and most talented artists illustrating comics today. Almost everything he draws is excellent. But Esteban's contemporaries felt he surpassed himself with his beautiful "Scream in the Forest" from CREEPY #53.



Best covers of 1973: EERIE #48, CREEPY #51, EERIE #46.



Best Art In Story: "A Scream In The Forest"—CREEPY #53.

BEST ARTIST/WRITER OF THE YEAR 1973

RICHARD CORBEN

Rich Corben returned to the Warren magazines this year, after an all too long absence. He started off by thrilling us with "Mickey Click Flip." And from there jumped to writing, drawing and coloring "Lycan-klutz"... unanimously chosen best story written by an artist.



BEST STORY OF THE YEAR 1973

BILL DUBAY

This may have been the year of the Warren magazines. But it was Bill DuBay's year as well. Besides coping honors for scripting the best story to appear in a Warren magazine this year, Dube became both Editor and Vice President of Warren Pub. Company.



"Lycan-klutz": Reason why Rich Corben is Best Writer/Artist.



Best Story: "Freedom's Just Another Word"—CREEPY #53.

Traditionally, the end of any year is a time to look back. To reflect upon where we've been and what we've accomplished, before striving ahead to the advancing new year.

Looking back on 1973, the writers, artists and editorial staff of the Warren magazines can well feel a sense of proud accomplishment. No one in the comics industry can deny, that 1973 has been the year of the Warren magazines.

First we gave you covers from the two

all-time greatest horror cover artists, Enrich and Sanjulian. We followed up with bizarre stories from the eloquently warped minds of writers John Jacobson, Jack Butterworth and Doug Moench. We bombarded you with the illustrious illustrative works of Jose Gonzalez, Ramon Torrents, Esteban Maroto and Felix Mas. We sent you into freaky acidian worlds of color with Richard Corben. And we gave you posters, games, more stories and more pages of horror than ever be-

fore.

The year 1973 saw the introduction of new Warren stars. The Mummy debuted with oldtimers Jaime Brocal and Steve Skeates. Martin Salvador cavorted about with our new Werewolf. Paul Neary made his and Hunter's bow in EERIE. Vicente Alcazar splashed into the Warren magazines with Schreck. And a kid from Spain named Isidro Mones kept popping up in a lot of magazines with his name misspelled, Munes!

The Warren Awards are an annual presentation, honoring the writers and artists who have consistently produced the absolute best stories and art during the past year. Traditionally, the Warren Award winners have been chosen by the editors and publisher of the three Warren magazines, CREEPY, EERIE and VAMPIRELLA. This year, however, both the writing and artistic staff were asked to participate in the selections. These then, the winners of the fourth annual Warren Awards, were selected by their fellow artists and writers as the most outstanding talent to appear in the Warren magazines during the year 1973.

BEST ALL AROUND ARTIST RAMON TORRENTS

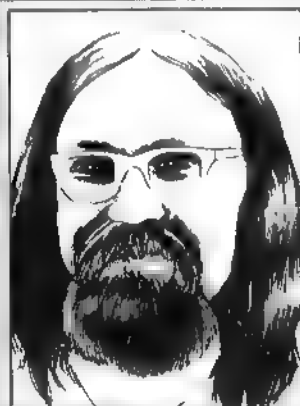
Ramon Torrents is a new Warren artist. His first work appeared in the early part of 1973. He hit us first with "Star Slaughter," "The Last Hero" and "Call It Companionship." All brought instant raves. And the Warren staff elected Ramon as most versatile artist.



"Star Slaughter" was Ramon Torrents' first for CREEPY.

BEST ALL AROUND WRITER STEVE SKEATES

Earlier this year, Steve Skeates received an award from the Academy of Comic Book Arts for a story Warren had turned down, "Poster Plague." Now, his peers have chosen Steve as the Best All-Around Writer. It's been a good year for Steve with "Changes," "Middle-Am" and The Mummy.



"The Mummy": Only one reason why Steve Skeates is tops.

Oldtimers Carl Wessler, Reed Crandall and Tom Sutton returned to the Warren fold. While oldsters Adolfo Abellan and Fernando Fernandez found us for the first time.

This was the year artist Auraleon discovered he liked drawing women and panthers. While old reliable Jose Bea kept churning out classic after classic.

And while all this was going on, some warped kid up in Canada with a Bezaire name kept trying to sell us his art. We

bought some of his stories instead! And poor Budd Lewis down in Louisiana didn't get Moench credit at all for writing about his "Most Private Terror."

A productive year for sure. Lots of pages. Lots of art and stories. Lots of headaches for editor Bill DuBay and assistants Jim Stenstrom and Bill Mohalley. The first aid chest was stocked with Excedrin... while publisher James Warren basked in the sun-browned sand of the Bahamas, the Hamptons, and that

SPECIAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING COVERS

ENRICH

There seemed to be no Warren Award category for Enrich. But because of his enthralling VAMPIRELLA covers, he was voted this much-deserved Special Award. Enrich's talent for color and realism is surpassed by none. He is truly one of the world's best artists.



Enrich: Excellent color, excellent art, one of the world's best!

SPECIAL AWARD FOR ALL-AROUND EXCELLENCE

RICHARD CORBEN

Rich Corben is one hell of a talent. But to Warren Publishing he's much more than that. He's a guy you can rely on. Rich pours his heart into his work. He constantly gives more than 100% of himself. Rich, we thank you... for your talent, drive, and friendship.



What's said about a super-talent who gives all? Rich Corben!

wonderful vacationland on the Sinai.

But if you think 1973 was the year of Warren, you've got to be here for 1974. You'll be in good company with Jeff Jones, Neal Adams, John Severin and Frank Frazetta. We'll have a new magazine by Will Eisner. More stories by your old favorites. And the best illustrators this side of the comics field. Nineteen seventy three was our best year yet. But 1974 will be the year of the Warren magazines!

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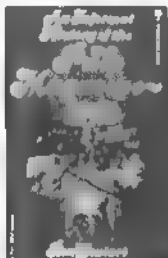
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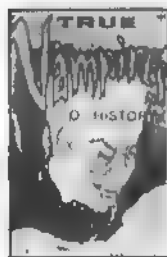
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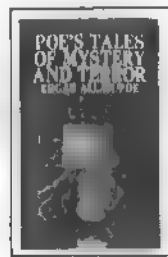
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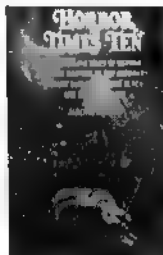
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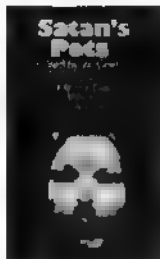
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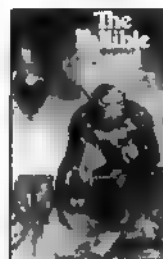
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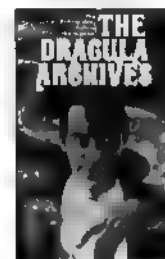
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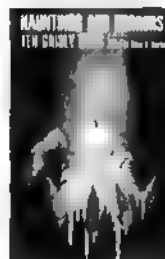
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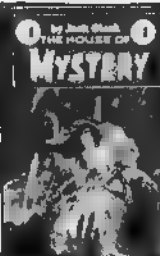
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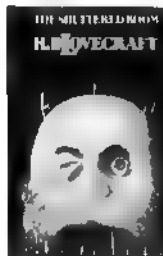
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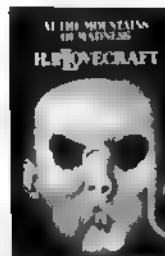
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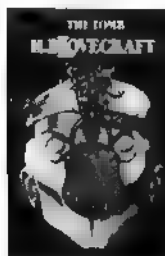
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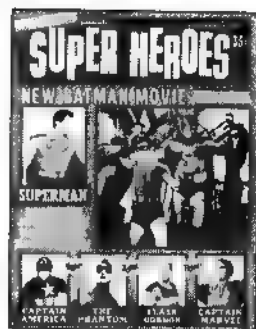
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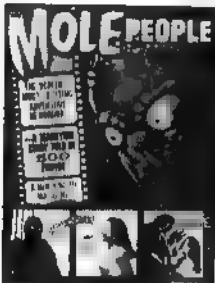
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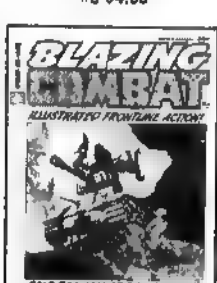
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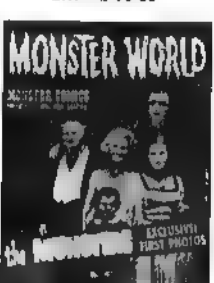
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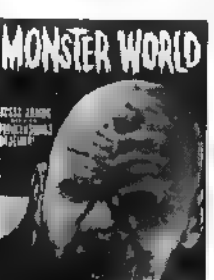
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HARRY

JEFF JONES

ROSES ARE RED
VIOLETS ARE BLUE.



DAWN ON THIS PARTICULAR DAY
FOUND A SURPRISE AMONG THE
LEAVES.



WE GOTTA
GET GOING,
HARRY.

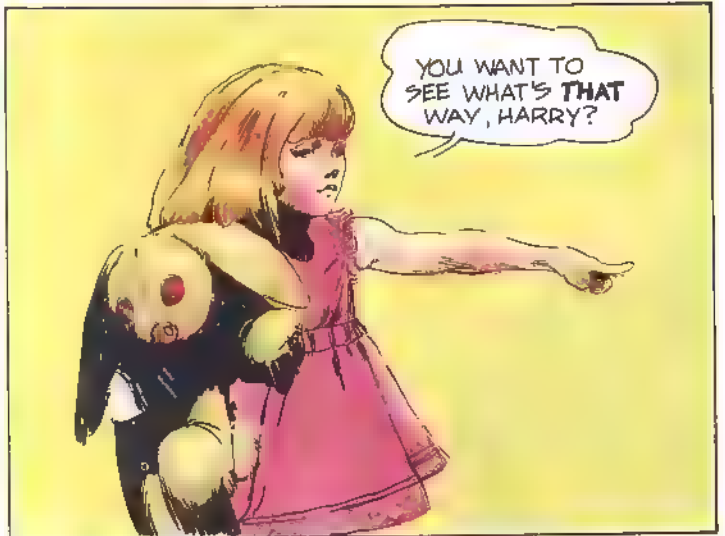


THE MORNING WAS ALIVE WITH BOUNDARY
AND HUNGRY WITH CHANGE.

WE GOTTA FIND
SOMETHING TO EAT.
OH, HARRY, YOU'RE
WET!
I DON'T WANT TO
GO BACK, EVER.
RIGHT, HARRY?
YOU'RE ALWAYS
RIGHT.



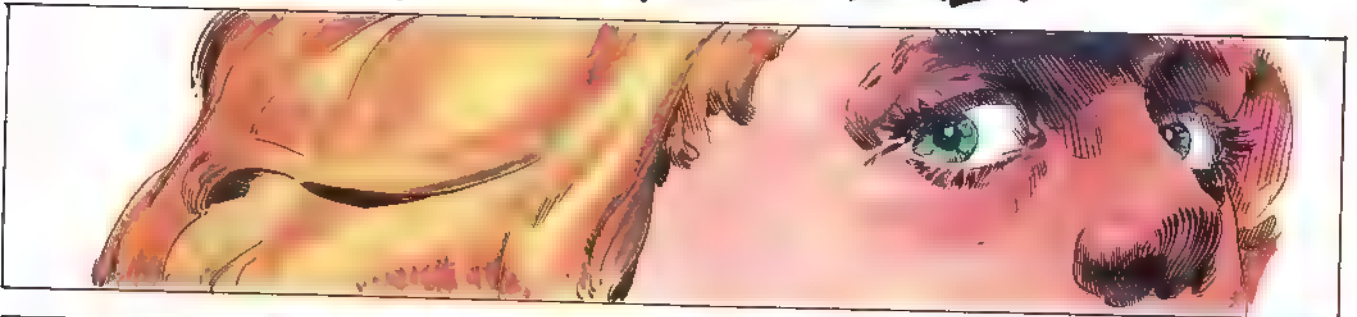
YOU WANT TO
SEE WHAT'S **THAT**
WAY, HARRY?



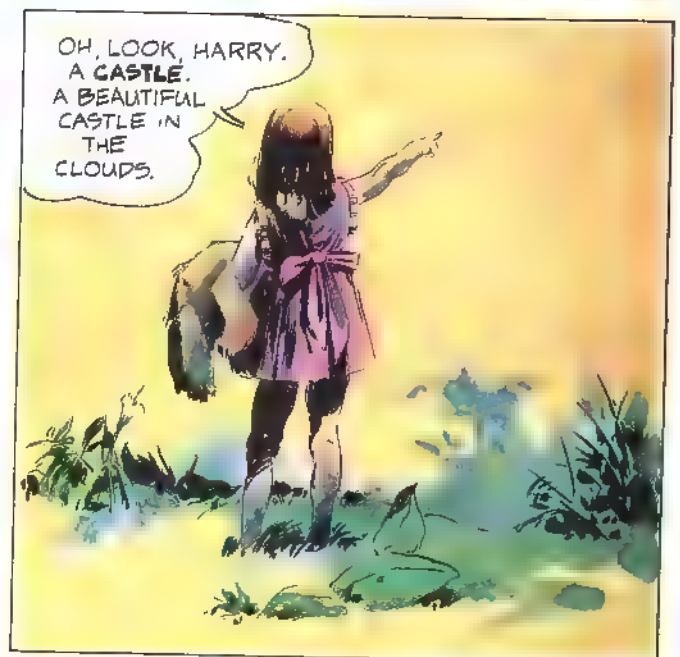
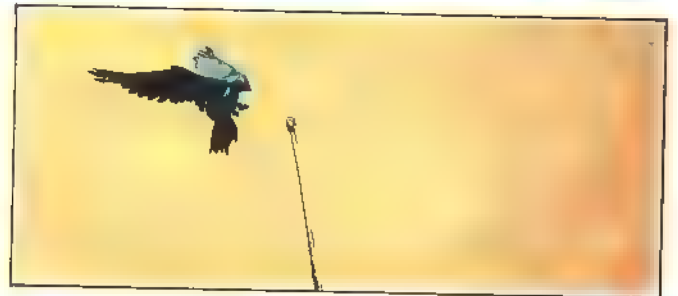
THE SUN BROUGHT A PRESENT, A FORGETFULNESS
OF WHAT WAS AND WHAT WILL BE.



AAAWWWKK!



HARRY! WHAT
WAS THAT!
YOU HEAR IT,
HARRY?



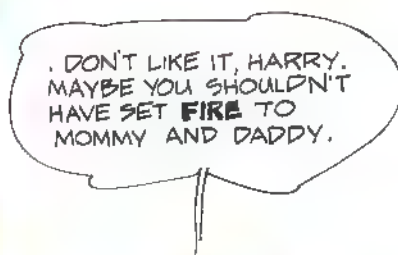
OH, LOOK, HARRY.
A CASTLE.
A BEAUTIFUL
CASTLE IN
THE
CLOUDS.



I NEVER SAW A
CASTLE BEFORE.
DID YOU, HARRY?
YOU'VE SEEN
EVERYTHING.

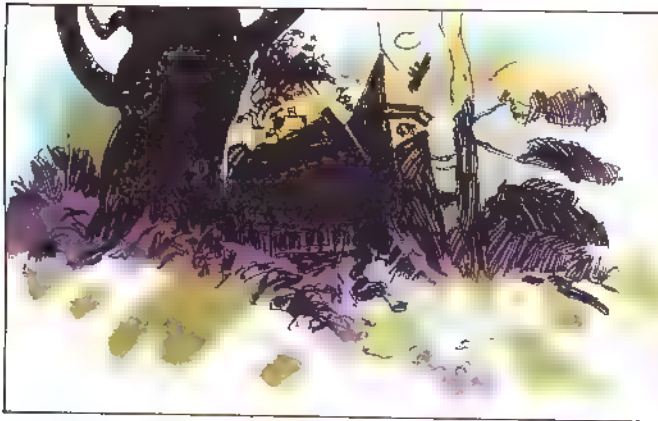


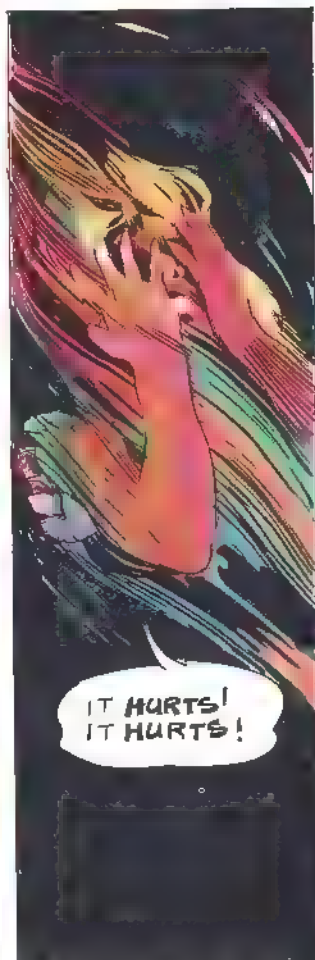
IT'S KIND OF DARK AND
SCARY IN THERE, HARRY
! I WONDER IF A
KING LIVES HERE.



. DON'T LIKE IT, HARRY.
MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE SET FIRE TO
MOMMY AND DADDY.







DEAD RUN

THE STARS WERE FADING
AROUND HIM AND HE
COULDN'T REMEMBER WHY.

AND NOW A TERROR WAS
STALKING HIM AND CLOSING
IN FAST. ALTHOUGH HE
COULDN'T SEE IT YET, ITS
CHOKING PRESENCE
GRIPPED HIS CHEST.



BREATHLESSLY HE SLOWED TO ADJUST THE
RUBBER AIR HOSE.



AND BACKED
INTO A HOLE



HIS HEAD REELLED AS HE COMES UP

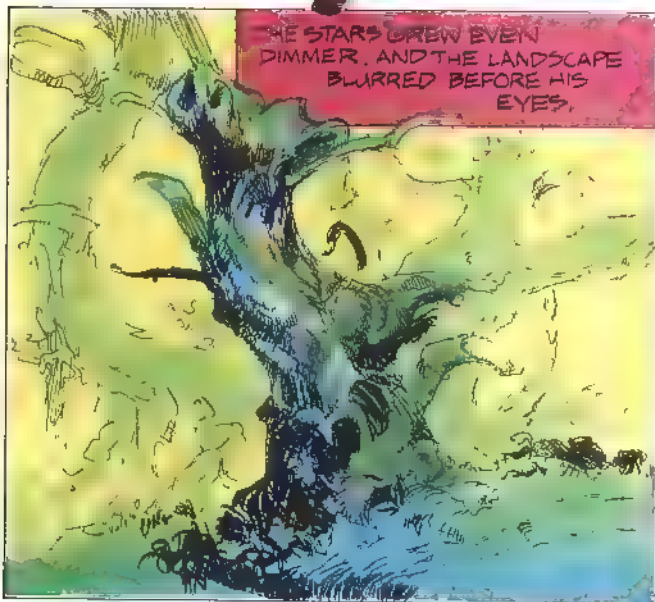


BUT IT
WAS STILL
THERE.

HE COULD TELL
YOU THINGS
ABOUT T
THAT WOULD
MAKE YOUR
BONES COLD,
AND THINGS
THAT WOULD
TAKE YOUR
BREATH
AWAY

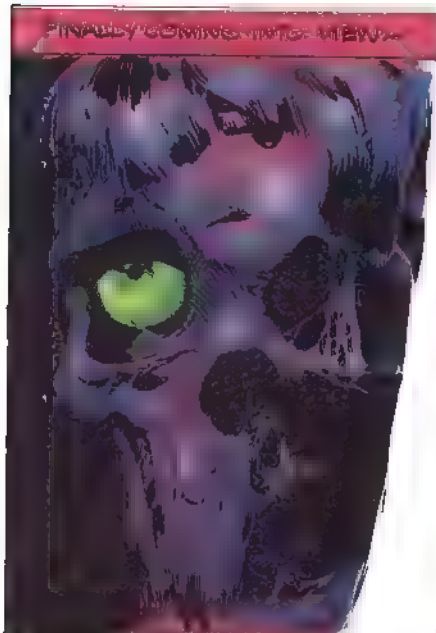


THE STARS GREW EVEN
DIMMER, AND THE LANDSCAPE
BLURRED BEFORE HIS
EYES.



AND NOW HE COULD GO NO FURTHER IN THE
END IT WOULD ALWAYS SHOW ITSELF

FINALLY COMING INTO VIEW



NEV TABLY—



JUST AS HIS AIR
RAN OUT

UNCLE CREEPY

COUSIN EERIE

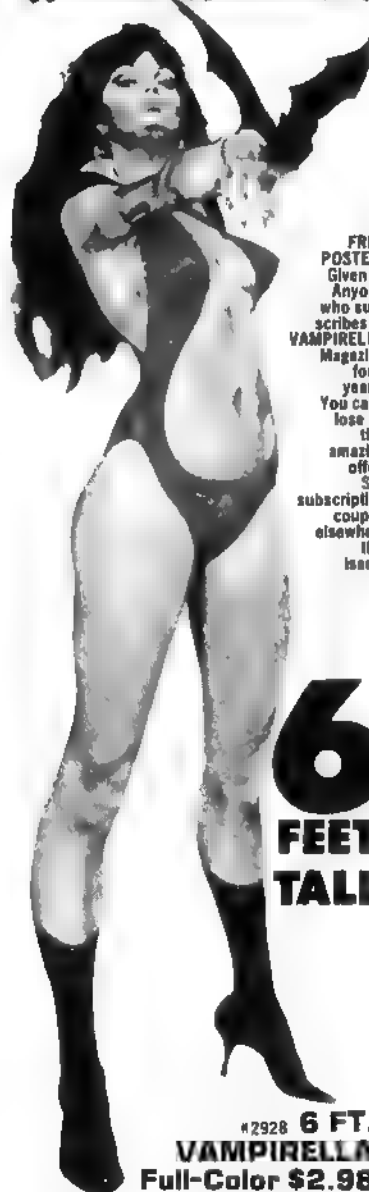
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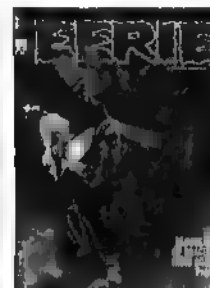
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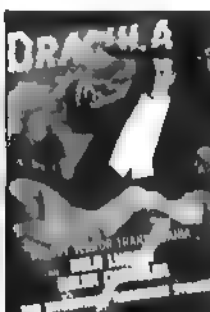
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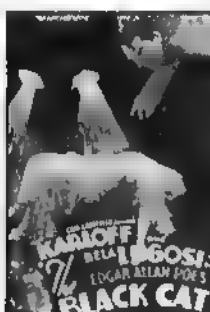
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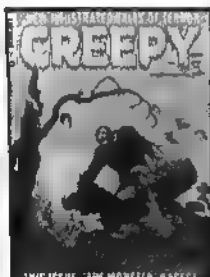
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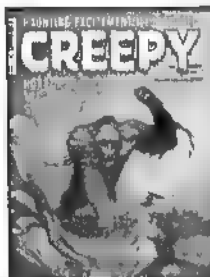
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PROLOGUE

ANTONIO
PUICELLI...

LUIS
MARTINO...



DINO! BACK
ALREADY? DID
YOU FINISH
YOUR BUSINESS
IN SICILY?

MEN OF
VENGEANCE...

MEN OF THE
BROTHER-
HOOD...

... MEN
KILLED IN
COLD BLOOD
BY DINO
ARMANI!

YES, JIMMIE! DOESN'T TAKE ME
LONG TO DO SOMETHING ONCE I PUT
MY MIND TO IT. BUT *YOU* KNOW THAT.
I TOOK YOU *INTO* THIS BUSINESS...
TAUGHT YOU EVERYTHING... GAVE
YOU ANYTHING YOU *WANTED*...

YOU SHOULDN'T
HAVE GOTTEN
GREEDY WHILE
I WAS *GONE*,
JIMMIE!



ANGELA
BELONGS TO
ME, AND NO
ONE ELSE.



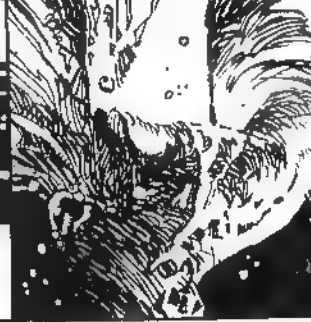
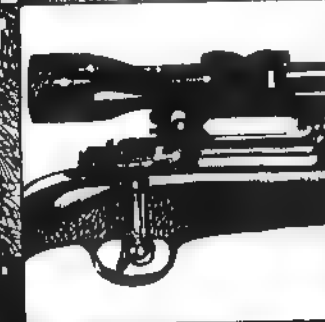
WHY?



WITNESS **DINO ARMANI**. PITILESS, CALCULATING, DEVOID OF MERCY OR COMPASSION! AN ALTOGETHER RARE SPECIE OF ANIMAL WHO **KILLS** WITH OUT EFFORT OR REMORSE.



HIS LIVELIHOOD IS **CORRUPTION**. HE LIVES ON THE GREED OF HIS ENEMIES, AND THE GRIEF OF HIS VICTIMS. NOT SIMPLY A **LINK** IN THE ORGANIZATION, BUT A **PRIME-MOVER**.



THE ARABS HAVE A WORD FOR HIM: **HASHHASHIN**. A SINGLE-TRACK MIND, CONSCIENCE ONLY DURING THE ACTION OF **MURDER**. WITH **ONE PURPOSE TO KILL!**

Belaudes

SOME SAY SUCH A MAN COULD NOT **POSSIBLY** HAVE A **SOUL**. TO THAT EXTENT THEY CAME CLOSEST IN THEIR DESCRIPTION, FOR **DINO ARMANI** WAS, IN FACT...

THE MAN WHOSE SOUL WAS SPOILING!

WHY DID YOU DO IT, ANGELA?

DINO! FOR GOD'S
SAKE! WHERE DO
YOU **GET** THESE
CRAZY IDEAS? JIM-
MIE MEANT **NOTHING**
TO ME! YOU MUST
BELIEVE THAT!

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN
I COULDN'T **TRUST** YOU,
ANGELA! WAS IT THAT
HARD TO BE **FAITH-**
FUL TO ME?

ANSWER
ME, YOU SCUM!

DINO!
PLEASE!
I **HAVE** BEEN
FAITHFUL TO YOU,
I **SWEAR** IT!
YOU'RE MAKING
A **TERRIBLE**
MISTAKE!

DON'T DO
IT, DINO!

BLAM!
BLAM!

MY MISTAKE
WAS IN **TRUSTING**
YOU, BABY. ALL THE
YOUNG BULLS IN THE
WORLD, AND YOU HAD
TO PICK **JIMMIE**.
HE WAS LIKE A KID
BROTHER TO ME!

BUT DINO
ARMANI MAKES
FEW MISTAKES...
AND NONE GO
UNRECTIFIED
FOR LONG...

I... TOLD... YOU...
THE... TRUTH... DINO...
I... I... **LOVED**... YOU
WHY... COULDN'T... YOU
TRUST... ME...
WHY??

YOU DIDN'T
TELL ME! NONE
OF YOU! DO I HAVE
TO GET **ALL** MY
INFORMATION
SECOND-HAND?
YOU **KNEW** WHAT
WAS GOING ON
BETWEEN
ANGELA AND
JIMMIE! AND
YET NOT ONE OF
YOU SAID A
WORD ABOUT
IT!

WHAT ARE
YOU **LOOKING**
AT? **HER?** WELL,
TAKE A **LONG**
HARD LOOK!

"THIS IS WHAT
HAPPENS TO **ANY-**
BODY WHO FIGURES
TO **CROSS** ME! YOU
PLAY **MY** RULES..."

"...OR
YOU DON'T
PLAY AT
ALL!"

NOW HAS
SOMEBODY **ELSE** GOT A
SECRET I SHOULD KNOW
ABOUT? SOMEBODY **ELSE**
THINK THEY CAN PUSH
DINO ARMANI OFF THE
TOP? LET ME HEAR
IT NOW!

WE DIDN'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT IT,
DINO! THAT'S THE
TRUTH!

WE'RE
WITH YOU,
DINO! ALL
THE WAY!

ONE
THOUSAND
PERCENT.

NO,
DINO! **NO**
SECRETS!

WHAT-
EVER YOU SAY,
BOSS!



YOU *KNOW* WHO'S THE **BOSS** AROUND HERE! DON'T FORCE ME TO **REMIN**D YOU AGAIN!

NOW... THERE'S GOING TO BE SOME **CHANGES... BIG** CHANGES... STARTING **HERE** AND GOING RIGHT TO THE TOP.

NO MORE WILL DINO ARMANI BE MADE A **LACKEY**. NOT BY THE **HEADS** OF THE **FAMILIES**... NOT BY **ANYBODY**. STARTING **NOW** DINO ARMANI WORKS FOR **HIMSELF!**

GOT A NEW DEAL FOR YOU BOYS. AND WITH YOUR HELP, **I'M TAKING OVER!**



SOUNDS GREAT, DINO.



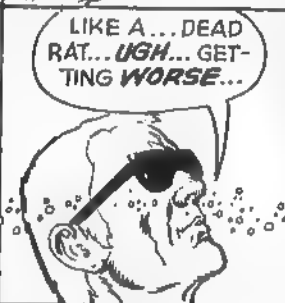
I... WE... WE'RE BEHIND... YOU...



WHA... WHAT THE **HELL** IS THAT?



A... SMELL... HORRIBLE!



LIKE A... DEAD RAT... **UGH... GETTING WORSE...**



GOD! IT'S... MAKIN' ME... **UGH... SICK...**



PUTRID... STINGIN' MY NOSE...



SEEMS TO BE COMIN' FROM... WHERE... DINO IS...



OOP..! I MEAN... THAT'S NOT... WHAT I MEAN... EXACTLY...



WHAT **EXACTLY** DO YOU MEAN? A **SMELL**? IS THAT A **JOKE**? THAT I **SMELL** BAD?



NO, NO, NO, DINO! I... MEAN... IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE! **REALLY!** JUST BACK FROM A LONG TRIP AND ALL... JUST A **BAD JOKE..!**



YOU **SLIMY** WEASEL! I'M **SICK** OF YOUR **JOKE**S AND YOUR **MISTAKES**, AND YOUR **LIES!** IT STOPS **NOW!**

YOU SAID
NO **SECRETS!**
I WAS ONLY TELL-
ING YOU THE TRUTH
...DINO! DON'T!
NOOOO!



DIIINOOO!

**BLAM!
BLAM!**



IT'S...
TOO...LATE
FOR...YOU...
DINO! YOU...
CAN'T...EVEN
FACE...THE
TRUTH...



TELL...
HIM. TELL
HIM...HE
SMELLS...
LIKE...A
DIRTY...
DOG...

A...
SPOILED
PU...PU...
PUTRID...
THING...
AGGH.



**YEAH, C'MON AND TELL
ME! ALL OF YOU...WHAT?
THEY'VE RUN OFF!**

**SCARED
OF ME, THE
SPINELESS
SOP?**

BUT WHY **ALL** OF
THEM? THEY HAD ME
OUTNUMBERED. THEY
KNEW I COULDN'T
PUSH THEM TOO FAR!



THEY'RE
REALLY IN FOR IT
WHEN THEY GET
BACK... I'M...
:SNIFF:... GOING
TO...:SNIFF:...

HOW CAN
I SMELL SO
BAD AND
NOT **KNOW**
IT? :SNIFF:...
DOESN'T
MAKE
SENSE...

:SNIFF:...
:SNIFF:... I
MIGHT BE **SICK**
OR SOMETHING...
AND...:SNIFF:...
NOT BE ABLE TO
SMELL IT...

I'D BETTER
GET THEM BACK.
THEY'VE LEFT
ME ALONE...!
COULD BE
DANGEROUS IF
MY **ENEMIES**
FOUND OUT...!

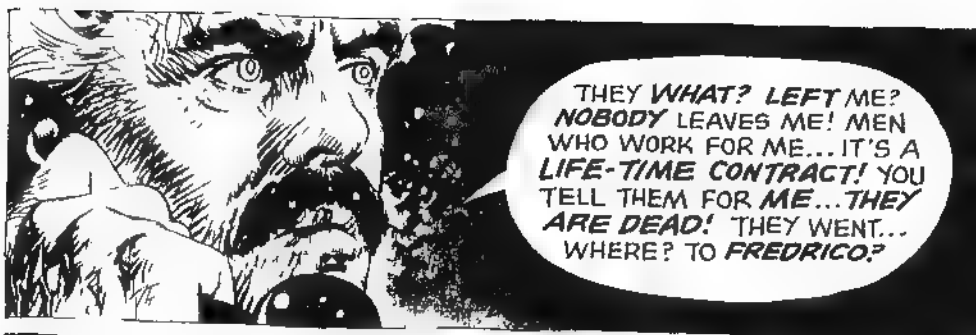
I DON'T
SMELL ANY-
THING.



SOME TIME HAD PASSED BEFORE DINO BECAME AWARE OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF HIS PREDICAMENT. INFORMATION CAME TO HIM BY PHONE, FROM HIS MAN *INSIDE*...



WHO? VISCELLI? WHAT ABOUT MY MEN?



THEY WHAT? LEFT ME? **NOBODY** LEAVES ME! MEN WHO WORK FOR ME... IT'S A **LIFE-TIME CONTRACT!** YOU TELL THEM FOR ME... **THEY ARE DEAD!** THEY WENT... WHERE? TO **FREDRICO?**

THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID, DINO! THE HEADS OF THE FAMILIES... **FREDRICO, TOO...** ARE MOST UNHAPPY. YOUR MEN TOLD THEM ABOUT YOUR PLAN TO **TAKE OVER**. IT LOOKS VERY **BAD**, DINO...

ANOTHER THING. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT... BUT THEY TOLD ME THEY'D RATHER **DIE** THAN BE NEAR THAT HORRIBLE **SMELL!**



REMAIN CALM. HAVE TO THINK. IF **FREDRICO** AND THE OTHER FAMILY HEADS SIDE AGAINST ME, I NEED A **PLAN**.



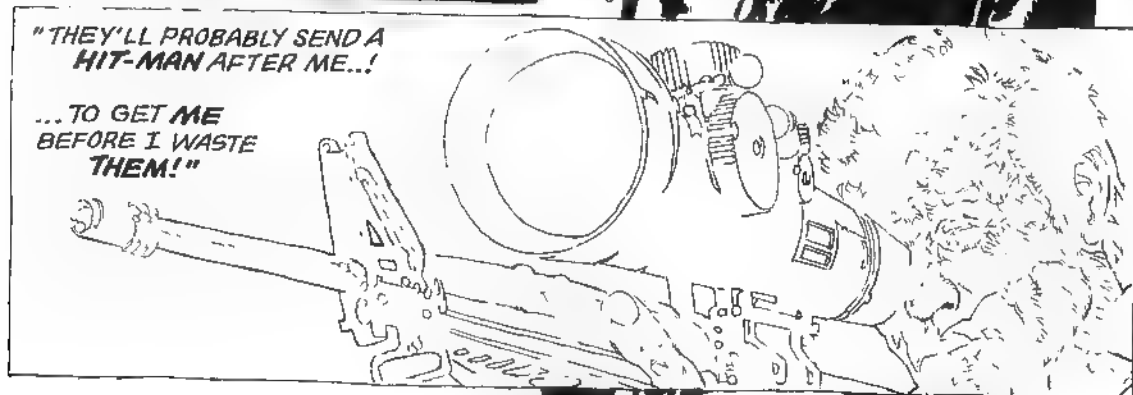
I CAN'T STAY **HERE**, THAT'S CERTAIN. I'LL HAVE TO **PULL OUT...** MAKE A **RUN** FOR IT WHILE I STILL HAVE THE TIME...

FILTHY, STINKING **TRAITORS**. THEY DO THIS TO ME AFTER I TAKE THEM UNDER MY WING. BUT I'LL BE BACK! **NOTHING** WILL SAVE THEIR SLIMY HIDES!



"THEY'LL PROBABLY SEND A **HIT-MAN** AFTER ME...!

...TO GET ME BEFORE I WASTE **THEM!**"





FREDRICO ARMANI BENT FORWARD, UNEASILY. THE OTHERS TOOK IT FOR **AUTHORIZATION**, AND HE DID NOT OPPOSE IT. THE **DECISION** TO ELIMINATE **DINO** FOLLOWED!



ALREADY! THEY'VE **ALREADY** SENT THEIR **VULTURES!** I HAVE TO GET **OUT** OF HERE!



THE ROOF AND STREET ARE **COVERED**. I'LL HAVE TO USE THE ALLEY...



THERE'S NO ESCAPE, DINO! YOU'RE EASIER TO SMELL OUT THAN A FISH MARKET!

**BAM
BLAM**

MISSED!
YOU WON'T GET
ANOTHER
CHANCE!



HAVE I MADE THE RIGHT DECISION, MARIO? HE IS THE SON OF MY BROTHER.



YES, FREDRICO, DINO HAS BECOME TOO DANGEROUS FOR US TO DEAL WITH. HE'S TOO **RUTHLESS...** HE MURDERS WHEN BUSINESS IS NOT INVOLVED.

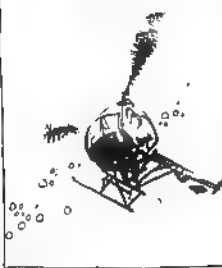
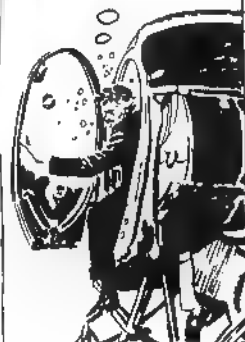
I'M SAFE. NOT EVEN MY **TRAITOROUS FRIENDS** KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS CHOPPER. I'VE SAVED IT FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCASION.

DINO ARMANI LAUGHED AS THE HELICOPTER CUT UPWARD. HE WOULD BE **BACK!** AND THE THOUGHT OF **SWEET VENGEANCE** MADE HIM HAPPY!



VERY WELL, MARIO. DO WHAT **MUST** BE DONE.

THIS MAN IS **TOTALLY EVIL...** AND LIKE A RABID DOG, HE MUST BE **DESTROYED**.



DINO ARMANI *RAN*. A CONTRACT ON HIS LIFE HAD BEEN SIGNED BY ALL THE FAMILIES. *LIVING* WAS NOW A MATTER OF KEEPING ON THE MOVE.


THEY CLOSE IN. IN LONDON. IN PARIS. VIENNA. BERLIN. DINO ARMANI WAS *RUNNING OUT* OF CITIES. AND IN EACH CITY, THEY DREW *CLOSER*.

AND THE *SMELL*, THE ROTTED ODOR THAT ENGULFED HIM WAS LEADING THEM *TO HIM*. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO STOP FOR LONG IN ANY ONE PLACE...HIS TRACKS WERE INEVITABLY PICKED UP.

THEY *NEVER* LET UP! IT'S THAT *SMELL!* THAT *DAMNED SMELL!!*

HIS PURSUERS CONTINUED THEIR RELENTLESS *DOGGING*...

OBVIOUSLY, DINO THOUGHT, THE ONLY WAY TO GET RID OF THE BLOODHOUNDS, WAS TO GET RID OF THE *SCENT*.



I'M VERY SORRY, MONSIEUR ARMANI. YOUR CASE IS FAR TOO **OBSCURE** FOR US TO DARE **ANYTHING** AT THIS TIME.

HERR ARMANI, THE ANALYSIS REPORTS ARE ALL **NEGATIVE**. ALL OUR EQUIPMENT SHOWS **NOTHING**. IT'S A **TOTALLY UNKNOWN PHENOMENA**.


IT'S **INCREDIBLE**, SIGNORE ARMANI. THERE IS NO **MEDICAL PRECEDENT**. PERHAPS IF I COULD ONLY PERSUADE YOU TO **REMAIN** HERE A FEW WEEKS...

YOUR CASE ESCAPES ALL PRESENT MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE. AND, I WOULD SAY, ALL **HUMAN KNOWLEDGE**! YOUR CURE, VERY FRANKLY, RESTS IN HANDS **BEYOND** EARTHLY LIMITATIONS!

"BEYOND EARTHLY LIMITATIONS." YES, MAYBE. THE **MALADY** AS THE **CURE**. PERHAPS THIS WAS A KIND OF PUNISHMENT... FROM **ABOVE**..!

DINO ARMANI CONTEMPLATED HIS **HUMBLENESS**. THE **ACRID STILETTO SHARP ODOR** WAS IN FACT HIS ONLY **REAL ENEMY**.

THE HAMMER OF **GOD**? THE LORD BEATING HIM TO DEATH WITH A **BLUNT INSTRUMENT**? DINO ARMANI DID NOT KNOW.



HE ONLY KNEW THAT, MADLY, **DESPERATELY**, HE ONLY WANTED TO **LIVE**.

AND THE **CLINGING STENCH** MARKED HIM LIKE A MOVING **TARGET**..!

BY CHANCE OR IRON
STANCE, OR EVEN SOME
THING ELSE, FOR SEVERAL
YEARS AFTERWARD, DINO
DID MANAGE TO REMAIN
ALIVE, BUT JUST ALIVE.

THE ROTTING SMELL ABOUT
HIM WAS LIKE A FENCE
THAT SEPARATED HIM
FROM ALL BUT THE *MEAGER-
EST* OF EXISTENCES! THE
SUFFERING AND TORMENT
HE LIVED WITH DAILY
ETCHED ITSELF ON HIS
FACE, AND TIME ITSELF
GREW *INDIGNANT* OF HIM.



PHEWW!
JEEZUS, DID YOU
DO THAT, ARTIE?

AWW, GOWAN,
WATCHA TALKIN'
'BOUT? I DIDN'
DO NUTHIN'.

IN ANOTHER
TIME, I COULD'VE
HAD HIM *DUMPED*
FOR THAT. BUT NOW...
EVERYWHERE I GO...
I CAN'T EVEN APPROACH
ANYBODY TO BEG A COIN.
EVEN *FILTHY DRUNKS*
WON'T COME NEAR
ME...!

WHOA! IT'S
COMIN' FROM *THAT*
GUY! HEY, YOU!
FELLA! GET
OUTTA HERE!

IN THE CITIES, THE GRIT-ASH AND SOOT SURROUND THE **PRISONERS** WITHIN: ONE PRISONER, MORE THAN OTHERS, FEELS ITS UNNATURAL **DREAD**.

DINO ARMANI, ONCE THE HATED AND FEARED **UNDERWORLD LEADER**, REDUCED TO A **DERELICT**, A SMELLING HUSK, FACELESS, NEITHER HATING NOR HATED. A **BROKEN** MAN... ROTTING IN HIS OWN **EVIL**...! SITTING AT THE **BOTTOM** AFTER HIS LONG FALL FROM POWER!



LONG SINCE **FORGOTTEN** BY HIS ENEMIES, THE CONTRACT ON HIS LIFE **EXPIRED**! YET, THROUGH THE YEARS HE MOVES ON, AIMLESSLY! THE SMELL OF HIS OWN EVIL BECOMING MORE AND MORE **OBSCURED** BY THE **CORRUPTION** AROUND HIM.

THE SAME DISEASE HE HAD BEEN INFLICTED WITH WAS NOW ATTACKING THE ENTIRE **WORLD** AROUND HIM...

THE EVIL STENCH OF **DRUGS**... OF FLYING ON AN **ETHEREAL HIGH** TO THE ULTIMATE **WASTE**!

THE DEATHLY STINK OF **WAR**. POLITICIANS BUYING THEM WHOLE-SALE...!

THE UGLY SMELL OF **POVERTY**... **HUNGER**... **DISCRIMINATION**... AND NATIONS' **DISGRACES**!



DINO ARMANI. NOWHERE TO GO. **LIVING**, SO PRECIOUS TO HIM, BECOMES A **MISERABLE EXISTENCE**... WALLOWING IN THE TOXIC BREATH OF CIVILIZATION... TAKING MORE THAN IT GIVES!



IT CLOSES IN ON HIM, THE **CORRUPTION**, THE **GARBAGE**, THE **FUTILITY** OF ANY BUT THE **BLEAKEST** OF FUTURES.

IT BREATHES DOWN HIS NECK... **HOT AND HEAVY**...

...UNTIL AT LAST, THE SMELL BECOMES TOO MUCH EVEN FOR **DINO ARMANI**...!

BANG!

PROLOGUE





DOUG *BROODED*... DRANK IN A LOUNGE AT THE AIRPORT... TRIED TO FIND HIMSELF IN A *LIFE* THAT SEEMED SUDDENLY *UNREAL*!



HE MADE HIS *DECISION* WHILE DOWNING HIS *FIFTH* BOURBON AND SODA...

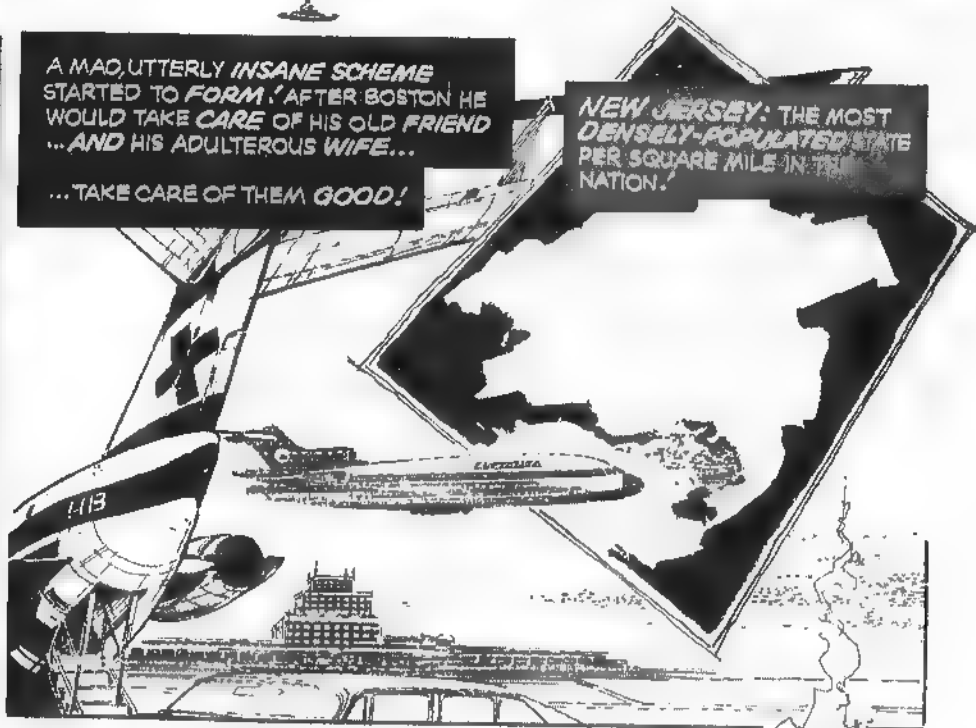
RITCHIE WILL HAVE TO *DIE*!



A MAD, UTTERLY *INSANE* SCHEME STARTED TO *FORM*. AFTER BOSTON HE WOULD TAKE *CARE* OF HIS OLD *FRIEND* ...AND HIS ADULTEROUS *WIFE*...

...TAKE CARE OF THEM *GOOD*!

NEW JERSEY: THE MOST *DENSELY-POPULATED* STATE PER SQUARE MILE IN THE *NATION*!



THE PINE BARRENS: THOUSANDS OF WOODED ACRES... UNTAMED *WILDERNESS*... EVER-RESISTING THE *TECHNOLOGICAL* TOUCH OF THE 20TH CENTURY.

FACT: A *MONSTER* DOES THEREIN *DWELL*!

TA-RA-KA SLUMBERS... A DEEP, ALMOST *DREAMLESS* SLEEP...

...*ALMOST*!





THE DEMON SLEEPS... TWISTED IMAGES
TURN WITHIN AN EVIL, ETHEREAL
CONSCIOUSNESS... HEAVENLY-CURSED
SCENES OF BLOOD-LUST AND DEATH!

WHAT DO THREE PEOPLE
AND A SLEEPING DEMON
HAVE IN COMMON? IT'S A
PUZZLE YOU MAY NOT
WANT TO UNRAVEL!

JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!

STORY: RICH MARGOPOULOS / ART: RAMON TORRENTS

THE DEMON HAS POSSESSED
MANY BEINGS... RESIDED IN
COUNTLESS FORMS!

ONCE HE WAS A FETID
IDOL-GOD IN ANCIENT
INDIA... DEMANDING
ENDLESS HUMAN SACRIFICES
AS APPEASEMENT...

THEN AN EVIL DRUID
PRIEST... WHOSE FLASHING
BLADE DEFILED THE SOFT
FLESH OF VESTAL VIRGINS...

...AND A FLEEING WITCH-
WRAITH IN OLD SALEM...
EXORCISED BY A BISHOP'S
CALL TO HIS GOD!

SUCH THOUGHTS! SUCH DEMENTED,
DEVIL-FRAUGHT DREAMS! WHEN
TA-RA-KA WAKENS HE MUST
IMPOSE HIS WILL ANEW... ON A
BEWILDERED WORLD!

BUT FOR NOW PRAISE GOD
THE DEMON SLEEPS...

RITCHIE! SINCE
YOU'RE A FREE LANCE
WRITER, I THOUGHT
THIS MIGHT APPEAL
TO YOU!

DAMN RIGHT! A
TRIP TO THE PINE
BARRENS TO CATCH
A DEVIL!

BUT DOUG...
HOW CAN YOU BE
SURE THERE IS
SUCH A THING?

CHECK OUT
THESE OLD NEWS
CLIPPINGS!

IN 1955 TWO
HUNTERS WERE
FOUND DISMEMBERED...
TORN LIMB FROM LIMB!

...AND ABOUT
THREE YEARS AGO... A
HERMIT WAS SCARED TO
DEATH! HIS DOG WAS
LATER FOUND...
MAULED!



SOMETHING'S
OUT THERE ALRIGHT!
SOMETHING **ALIVE!**

I'VE GOT THE
GEAR **PACKED!**
WE CAN **LEAVE**
AT **SUNRISE!**



GOT A LONG DAY
AHEAD! TIME I **SACKED**
OUT... CAUGHT SOME
WINKS!

SEE YOU **BOTH**
TOMORROW!

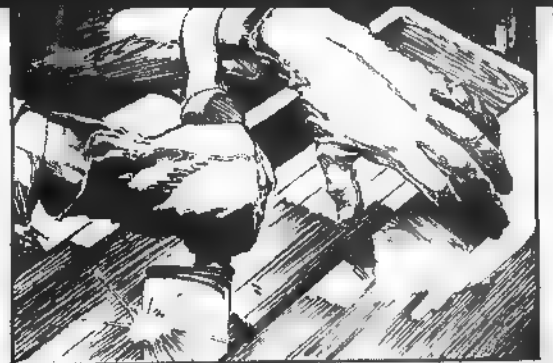
BYE-BYE,
RITCHIE!

MAKE THIS
GOOD, SUSAN..
IT'S YOUR **LAST**
FAREWELL!

AND THE DEMON
SLEEPS ON IN
THE DARKNESS...

AAAAHHHH! THE DEMON SIGHS...
REMEMBERING... LONG-LOST GLORY...
THE COOL DANK OF **STONEHENGE...**
A COLD GREY ALTAR OF **BLOOD-
STAINED GRANITE...**

WHILE DOUG STARTS THE FIRST PHASE OF HIS
WELL-PLANNED **REVENGE...**



THE GLORY OF THOSE OLD DAYS...
THE DEMON REMEMBERS...! OH, IT
WAS GOOD!

SUSAN!
CAN YOU COME IN
HERE FOR A
MINUTE?

YES?

...UNSPEAKABLY GOOD!

I'VE GOT
SOMETHING...

...FOR
YOU!

...JUST...

DOUG WRAPPED HIS WIFE'S STILL-WARM **BODY** IN CANVAS AND **BURIED** HER AMID NEAT GARDEN ROWS OF LETTUCE AND TOMATOES!

HE DID NOT **SLEEP** WELL THAT NIGHT!

IT **WASN'T** SO MUCH PANGS OF **REGRET** OVER **SUSAN**... BUT RATHER, HE COULDN'T WAIT TO **FINISH OFF** **RITCHIE**!

BRRRRRRRING!



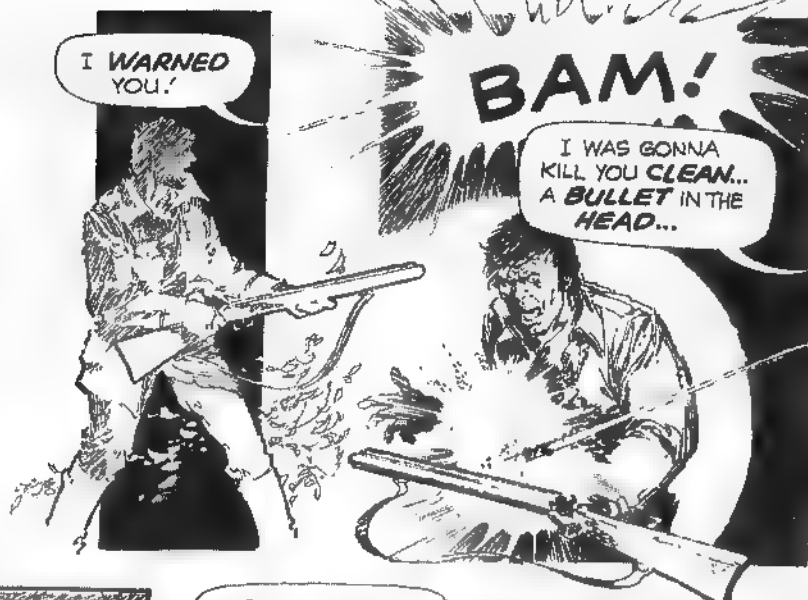
HOURS OF **DRIVING**... THEN HOURS OF **WALKING**... UNTIL...

AT **LAST!** THE MOMENT I'VE **LIVED** FOR... WHEN I BRING THIS **GRIM CHARADE** TO A CLOSE!

THIS IS IT, OLD "**FRIEND**"... THE **END** OF THE **LINE!!**

PARKWAY

...I DIDN'T WANT TO **DISTURB** HER!



BLURRED
EYES TREMBLE
OPEN...
FASTEN ON A
FEEBLE
HUMAN
FORM!

WHAT IS THE MAN **DOING?**
HURRIEDLY FEEDING BRASS
PELLETS INTO A METAL
AND WOOD TUBE!

PERHAPS IT IS A **NEW**
WITCHCRAFT RITUAL...
A **PROTECTION-**
SPELL...

YES! THE MAGIC **STINGS...**
BUT IT IS **NOT** POTENT
ENOUGH!

THE MORTAL **LACKS**
THE SKILLED TOUCH OF
AN **EXORCIST!**

MIGHTY MASSIVE **LIMBS**
ENCIRCLE **DOUG'S** FLESH
AND BLOOD FRAME!

TA-RA-KA PONDER'S! SHOULD
HE **CRUSH** HIS PREY LIKE AN
OVER-RIPE GRAPE... OR **POSSESS**
ITS BODY... **RAPE** ITS VERY SOUL!

THE **DEMON** WEIGHS THE VALUE OF EACH
ALTERNATIVE! IN EITHER CASE, THE
DECISION WILL BE LIKE OLD TIMES...

...SO **UNSPEAKABLY GOOD!**

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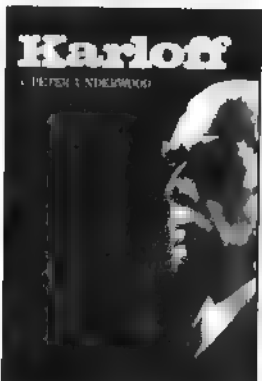
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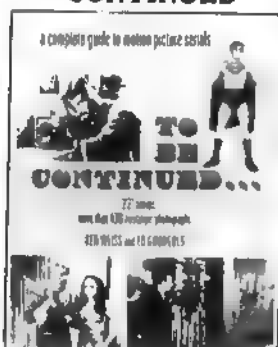
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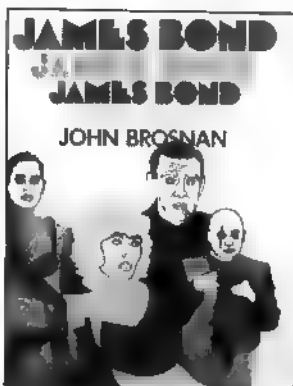
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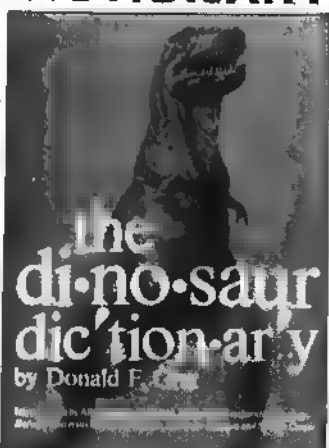
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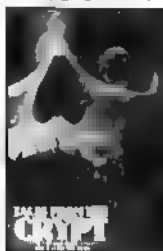
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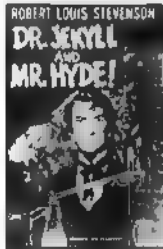
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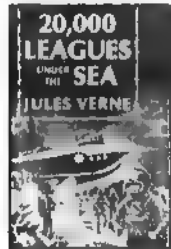
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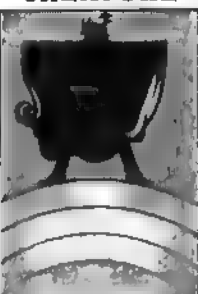
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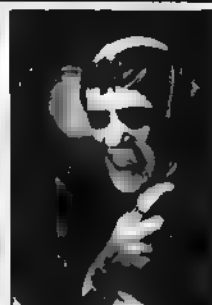
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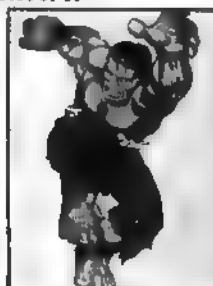
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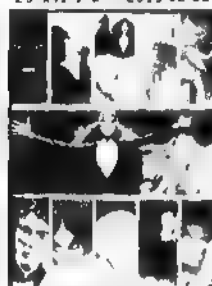
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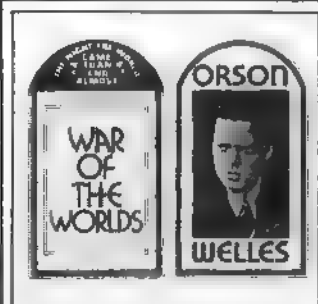
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The first creeping story of Southern decadence & evil
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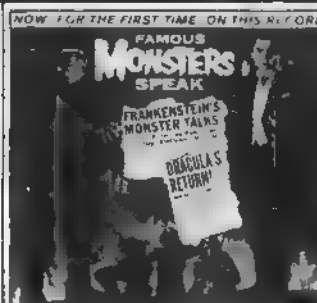
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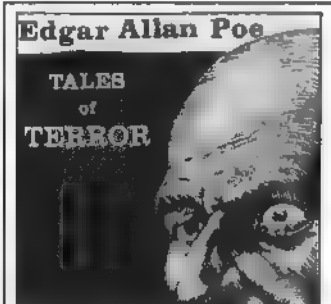
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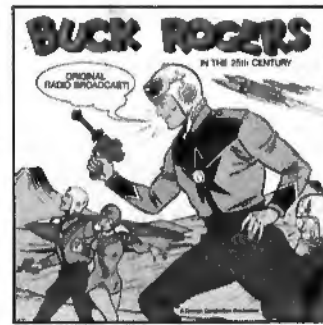
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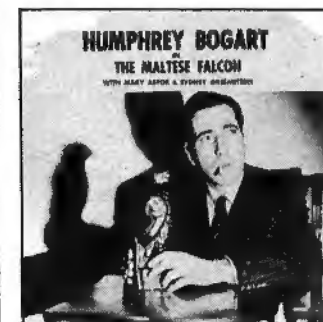
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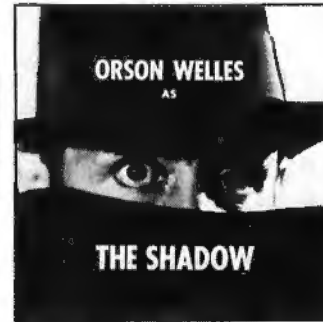
THE MALTESE FALCON was a jinxed statuette that brought death to thousands, and riches to Dashiell Hammett, and fame to Bogey! Also Bogey in another Hammet yarn, "Love's Lovely Counterfeit." Two super Radio Adaptations from the 1940's. #2334 MALTESE FALCON \$5.95



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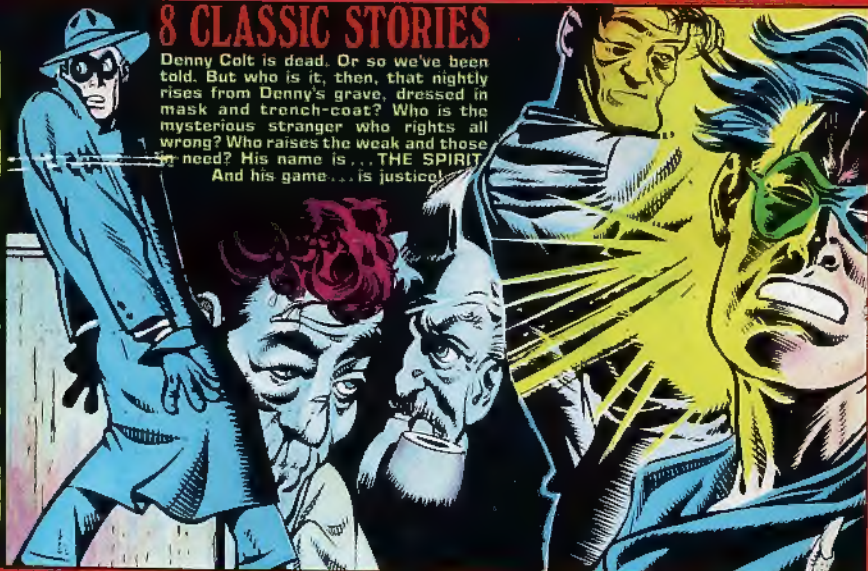
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